

Breathing's Just a Rhythm

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Breathing's Just a Rhythm

by [MollyPollyKinz](#)

Summary

POGTOPIA??? WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?? TIMETRAVELBLADE. technotravel

“Chat, I did not time travel,” Techno said exhaustedly, “I don’t know what gave you that idea, but please calm yourselves.”

The voices started obnoxiously whispering at the top of their lungs. *HE DOESN'T KNOW. PANIC*

Or: Tommy, Tubbo, Jschlatt, and Dream all end up in the past. (Oh, and the Chat comes too) (mcd is a villain, this fic has a happy ending)

Notes

So I'm sure you've all heard about Wilbur turning out to be terrible. If you haven't, maybe look into it. Well, between him and Dream, I'm putting this disclaimer in all my fics. These characters are not the CCs, nor do they reflect my opinion on them. Either separate the two or don't read the fic. Thank you <3

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

We're Not in Kansas Anymore

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy jerked awake with a start. He tried to breathe, but all he could manage were some pained gasps.

Dream wasn't here. Tommy was safe with Techno. Tommy was safe.

The air in his room was musty. It reminded Tommy of Pogtopia.

Breathing became harder.

As Tommy tried to pull himself together, the door slammed open. Tommy didn't bother to look up at Techno. He knew that he was being too loud, but Tommy couldn't stop.

"Tommy, what's going on in here?"

It wasn't Techno. Tommy could recognize Ghostbur's voice anywhere, but it was... different. More down to earth. He sounded like...

"Wilbur?" Tommy whispered.

Tommy flinched when a hand firmly grasped him by the shoulder. "Yeah, it's me. Another nightmare?"

Tommy glanced up at his older brother and stopped breathing entirely.

It was Wilbur. Wilbur was standing right in front of him. He was real, and he was living, and Tommy could feel his hand firmly on his own shoulder, and—

And he was wearing the trench coat.

This was another nightmare; Tommy knew it had to be another nightmare. But it felt *so* real.

Tommy's brain went on autopilot. "I don't get nightmares," he said, trying to sound bold and utterly failing, "I'm a big man, Wilbur."

He let the name roll off his tongue. *Wilbur*. Not Ghostbur. *Wilbur*.

His older brother. The man that haunted his nightmares. His older brother. The one to destroy everything.

Wilbur caressed Tommy's cheek, and he tried not to lean into the touch too much. Wilbur didn't care about him.

But this was a nightmare. It didn't matter much, anyway. Maybe he should be glad that Wilbur was acting nice for a change. Typically, the Wilbur in his nightmares was threatening him in some way.

"Oh, Toms," Wilbur whispered, sounding comforting, "We both know you're just a kid behind that bravado."

Tommy's brain was screaming at him. Screaming that it was a trap. That he should run. That he should leave before he be wrapped around Wilbur's thumb.

But who cared, anyway? This was just a nightmare. Wilbur was alive. Tommy should be allowed to enjoy it. It wasn't like Wilbur was hurting him. He hadn't even insulted him yet.

There was still an unsettled feeling in his stomach as he hugged Wilbur, feeling his brother's chest rise and fall, feeling his brother's heart beat strongly. Alive. Not dead.

"What was it about?" Wilbur asked, as if comforting a small child.

Tears burned the corners of Tommy's eyes, but not because he was scared or sad. This was quite possibly the best dream he had experienced in months. Wilbur was alive, and he was comforting him, and it felt *so good*.

It also felt real. *Too* real. A little niggler in his mind wondered if this wasn't a dream.

Tommy dismissed such thoughts. It had to be a dream, what else could it be?

"Dream was there," Tommy said, "And Schlatt."

Wilbur stiffened at Schlatt's name. Tommy stiffened in turn. He forgot that Wilbur didn't like Schlatt to be mentioned. He couldn't remember if there were any consequences for it, or if Wilbur would just look at him with that disappointed look.

Tommy didn't look forward to either of the options.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Toms," Wilbur cooed, "But let's not talk about that man, okay?"

Tommy nodded, feeling relief wash over him.

Eventually Wilbur let go. "Come on," he said, "Breakfast and then time for work."

This was becoming a suspiciously long dream. As he stumbled out of bed, Tommy pinched himself.

It hurt.

Okay, so maybe this wasn't a dream after all. Maybe Tommy was just lost it. He was living in a hallucination. Had Tommy eaten anything strange recently? Tommy didn't think so.

They ate a breakfast of potatoes, and Wilbur sent Tommy to mine for resources. Tommy did so without complaint. This hallucination was getting scarily realistic, and Tommy knew what

would happen if he didn't obey.

Tommy felt his chest squeeze up at the thought, and he forced himself to stay calm. This wouldn't last forever. Tommy was fine.

It wasn't until Tommy returned after mining for hours that he started considering the possibility that he was stuck here.

Fortunately, Wilbur seemed happy enough with the supplies he had managed to gather, which was a small blessing, at least. Tommy was trying to figure out what was going on.

Had he time traveled? Was that even a thing that could happen?

Damnit, Tommy had definitely time traveled. Would he have to relive all of this all over again?

Wilbur's destabilizing mental state. Tubbo dying on that stage. L'manberg exploding. Techno spawning the Withers. Phil killing Wilbur.

Tommy scowled. No. He wouldn't let that happen. Not again.

So, Tommy did the only logical thing. He pulled out his communicator. He needed to get Phil. Phil would be able to help Wilbur, as long as he didn't kill him first.

Tommy jumped when Wilbur grabbed him by the wrist.

"What are you doing?" he asked, his voice suddenly dangerous.

Tommy forced his voice to stay steady. "I was just going to message Phil," he said, "I thought he might want to know how we're doing."

Tommy let out a cry of pain as Wilbur twisted Tommy's wrist, forcing the communicator out of his hand.

"I thought I told you we can't trust anyone," Wilbur said, not letting go of Tommy's wrist, "Remember, Toms?"

How could he forget? It was the same with Dream too.

"I wasn't going to call for him," Tommy lied, "I just thought he wanted to know if we were doing okay. That's not a crime, is it?"

Tommy shrunk back when he saw Wilbur scowl. "I'm only trying to protect you Tommy. Phil doesn't care about us."

Tommy shuddered. He knew he shouldn't argue, but maybe if he could convince Wilbur that Phil *did* care, maybe that could be the first step to recovery.

Even inside his head, it sounded like a long shot, but Tommy had to try.

“Phil *does* care, though.” Tommy’s eyes teared up in pain as Wilbur twisted his wrist further. “He can—”

“*Tommy,*” Wilbur snapped.

Tommy flinched violently, and for a moment, he thought he saw Dream towering over him. He blinked, and Wilbur was back, scowling down at Tommy.

Wilbur let go of Tommy, and Tommy quickly cradled his already swelling wrist.

“I think I’ll hold onto this for now,” Wilbur said, swiftly pocketing Tommy’s communicator, “There’s no one you can trust that isn’t already here, anyway.”

Tommy didn’t say anything as his now living brother walked away. Tommy had always known this wasn’t going to be easy, but maybe this was going to be harder than he thought, which was saying something.

Tubbo woke up in a bedroom that hadn’t been his in months.

Feeling tired and sleep deprived, he did the only the logical thing and looked out the window.

Tubbo’s jaw dropped. It was *L’menberg*. L’menberg before Wilbur blew everything up and Technoblade spawned the withers. L’menberg before Tubbo worked tirelessly during the reconstruction.

Tubbo’s stomach flipped when he saw a flag outside his window. *Manberg’s* flag.

Okay, so he was in the past. This was fine. This was totally fine. One day he was president of a country; the next day he was secretary of state to a tyrant. This was fine. Everything was fine.

While he was here, though, Tubbo might as well try to improve things for everyone here.

Quickly shoving on his suit, Tubbo all but sprinted to the White House. When he reached the building, he headed straight toward one of Schlatt’s alcohol stores.

It was early, and the hallways were empty as Tubbo found the bottles of alcohol. Tubbo quickly scooped them up in his arms and turned around to walk to the kitchen.

When he opened up the first bottle of beer, the strong smell almost overwhelmed Tubbo. He shuddered, trying not to think of how he could smell Schlatt’s breath when he screamed in Tubbo’s face.

Tubbo emptied the first bottle into the sink. Then the next, and the next, and the next, until all of the bottles were empty. Then, he began scrounging the White House for all of the alcohol Tubbo could find and emptied them into the kitchen sink.

As Tubbo was emptying the second to last bottle he had, Quackity spoke from behind him. “Uh, Tubbo?”

Tubbo jumped, nearly instinctively hitting Quackity in the head with the glass bottle. Quackity raised his hands in surrender and took a quick step back.

“Sorry, Big Q,” Tubbo sighed, “I didn’t see you there.”

Quackity raised an eyebrow as he lowered his hands. “Yeah, I could tell.” He stared at the empty glass bottles on the kitchen counter. “What are you doing?”

Tubbo glanced down at the bottle he was holding before placing it down and grabbing the last full one on the counter. “What does it look like I’m doing?” he asked tersely as he dumped it out.

“It looks like you’re emptying the White House of alcohol,” Quackity said, “You know Schlatt won’t like that.”

Tubbo gripped the bottle he was holding tightly, trying not to think about what Schlatt would do when he found out what Tubbo had done. “I know Schlatt’s less dangerous when he’s sober,” Tubbo corrected, half reassuring himself, “and he can be reasoned with.”

Tubbo needed Schlatt to be reasonable. He needed to convince Schlatt to let Tommy back into L’manberg. Tommy couldn’t be left with Wilbur, not again.

Tubbo squeezed his eyes shut, trying not to think about what Tommy had said when they had last met.

Monster.

Tubbo wasn’t a monster. He wasn’t.

He exiled Tommy. Just like Schlatt. He tried to execute Technoblade, who had been minding his own business. That seemed like something Schlatt would do.

Tubbo let out a shout and threw the empty bottle in his hand at the wall. He winced when it shattered loudly.

Quackity gave Tubbo a shocked look. “What the heck was that?”

Tubbo was breathing heavily, and he massaged his chest, trying to calm the beating of his heart. He wasn’t really sure what happened. It was just all too much. Normally, when that happened, he would just throw a pillow at the wall, but he supposed that the bottle was all that he had in his hand.

A familiar groan sounded from the doorway, one that Tubbo never thought he had to hear again. Both Tubbo and Quackity froze. Tubbo turned around, staring at Schlatt with dread.

Schlatt was massaging his temple, probably trying to get rid of the headache that came with his morning hangover. He looked much more exhausted than he did in Tubbo’s nightmares.

“What’s going on in here?” he moaned, glancing up at Tubbo and Quackity.

Tubbo instinctively took a step back, wondering how he could possibly hide a bunch of empty glass bottles and the shattered glass on the floor in less than a millisecond.

It was too late. Schlatt’s eyes had already landed on the empty bottles. Tubbo immediately shrank back.

“I’m sorry, I just—”

Tubbo froze when Schlatt smiled. “That’s alright, kid,” he said, “It was probably for the best, anyway.”

He continued walking past the kitchen and down the hallway, only bothering to call behind him, “One of you has to clean that glass up!”

Not having any idea of what was going on, Tubbo let out a hysterical laugh. Maybe this was going to be easier than he thought.

Chapter End Notes

This fic is basically my excuse to write good Schlatt and pogtopia Wilbur.

I hope you enjoyed! :)

Comfort? Impossible.

Chapter Summary

Technoblade tries to be a good big brother. Tommy trusts no one. J'schlatt needs to be more careful with his words. Tubbo is politely confused.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy was trying to splint his wrist, which was harder than it may sound, due to the fact that he only really had one hand to do it with.

He still couldn't believe that he was here. That he was in the past. That Wilbur was a freaking maniac again. If he had to be pushed into the past, couldn't he have gone before the Election? Maybe then, Tommy would have an easier time of saving his brother from himself.

Oh well, there wasn't much he could do about it now.

Tommy swore loudly when he dropped a piece of his splint. Moments later, he heard knocking on his door.

Tommy stiffened, wondering if it was Wilbur, before remembering that Wilbur never knocked. He just walked in like he owned the place. Which, in a way, he did.

"Who is it?" Tommy asked, keeping his voice calm. If it wasn't Wilbur, that only really left two options. Tommy could only hope he landed on the better of the two.

"Technoblade," Techno said from behind the door.

Tommy relaxed slightly, before reminding himself to keep his guard up. This wasn't the Techno that helped Tommy stand up to Dream. This was the Techno that was wholeheartedly behind the plan to destroy L'manberg.

"What do you want?" Tommy asked. His voice was terser than he would prefer, but it was hard to keep calm when memories of fireworks, withers, and sad lonely heroes began beating against his skull.

"Can I come in?"

Tommy wasn't sure why Techno was asking. If he wanted to go in so badly, he could always just open the door. It wasn't like it was locked or anything.

With that in mind, Tommy sighed. "Fine."

Technoblade slowly opened the door with a soft creak. Tommy got to his feet as his older brother walked into the room. He looked almost no different than when Tommy had spoken to Technoblade the night before, even though that Technoblade was from the future.

“Hey, Tommy,” Technoblade said. Tommy watched as Techno’s eyes landed on the swelling around Tommy’s wrist.

Techno sighed and looked awkward as he held out a round bottle to Tommy. “This isn’t why I came in here, but I have a potion you can use.”

Tommy frowned at the potion. “You know that Wilbur doesn’t want me using those on punishments.”

From the way Techno’s face flashed, Techno did *not* know. Tommy tried not to be too confused over it.

“He’ll never know.” Techno’s lips were in a hard line as carefully pressed the potion into Tommy’s good hand. Tommy instinctively gripped the smooth glass tightly.

He would’ve preferred a gapple.

“Why do you care? I thought you were off getting ready to blow up a country.”

Tommy asked, trying not to sound too bitter. All of his bad memories of Techno were associated with this era of Tommy’s life, and he couldn’t help but to wonder why the heck Techno’s decided to be so nice now.

“Hey, I’m all for anarchy, but you’re my brother, and I don’t like seeing you hurt.” Techno hesitated. “Did Wilbur do this to you?”

“He’s just trying to protect me,” Tommy said, the instinctual lie slipping from his lips before he could stop it. Or maybe it wasn’t a lie. Maybe Wilbur really did believe that he was protecting Tommy.

It didn’t really matter, in the end. Manipulation and abuse was still manipulation and abuse, no matter how either side painted it.

Tommy wished he had realized that sooner.

“Protect you,” Techno repeated dryly. He sounded exactly like future Techno had when Tommy talked about Dream being his friend.

Tommy still got confused when he thought about that too hard. He pushed it out of his mind.

“Why are you doing this now?” Tommy asked suddenly, “This isn’t the first time he’s hurt me.”

Techno’s eyes flashed, and Tommy couldn’t stop himself from flinching back ever so slightly. “What do you mean?” Techno asked.

Tommy stared. Techno... really didn't know?

"How the heck do you know about this one if you don't know about all the others?" Tommy asked incredulously.

"Wilbur mentioned that you were trying to contact someone from the outside world, and so he took your communicator away. I didn't like the sound of that, so I came to ask you if Wilbur did that sort of thing often." Techno stared at Tommy's still mottled wrist grimly. "I didn't realize it had gotten physical."

"Don't worry about it," Tommy said quickly. Tommy didn't want to know how Wilbur would react if Techno left him too. "It's really not that big of a deal."

"And yet you still haven't drunk that potion because Wilbur told you no?"

Like Tommy was ever going to admit that. Tommy rolled his eyes. "Listen, this will heal up naturally in no time. I'll keep your potion for later."

"Tommy."

Tommy stiffened at the sternness in Techno's voice.

Techno sighed. "Drink the stupid potion."

Tommy grimaced, but he uncapped the regen potion and quickly swallowed it down. Warmth spread through his body, and Tommy watched as the swelling in his wrist reduced to nothing.

"Who were you trying to contact earlier?" Techno asked suddenly.

Tommy wanted to trust Technoblade. He really did. But could he? Technoblade was set on his ideals; he wasn't going to interfere with the plan to destroy Manberg. On the other hand, Technoblade had always had a good relationship with Phil. Maybe Techno wouldn't mind if Tommy said he was just updating Phil on the situation.

"Phil," Tommy muttered. He scowled defensively. "You've got a problem with it?"

Techno raised his eyebrows. "Any reason?"

Tommy shook his head. "I just wanted to tell him how we've been," he lied. Again.

Techno gently patted Tommy on the shoulder, and Tommy hated the way he flinched away at the touch. Techno quickly moved his hand away.

"I'll tell him," Techno said, "I know I'm not around Pogtopia much, but if you need help, you don't hesitate to come to me."

Tommy nodded, already knowing he wasn't going to do that. It was all too complicated for Technoblade to understand. And besides, Tommy still wasn't sure that he could trust Technoblade at all.

Even though he had been living with his older brother for a couple of weeks, Tommy still had nightmares about the angry words Techno screamed at him on the 16th, or about the bruises that Techno inflicted in the pit.

Tommy's stomach growled, and he *really* wished that Techno had brought him a gapple instead.

Technoblade stopped at the doorway. "Oh, and Wilbur told me that Dream was coming over tomorrow. I know there's some bad blood between you and him, so prepare yourself."

Tommy's heart *stopped*.

Tubbo was called into Schlatt's office a few hours after he and Quackity had finished sweeping the glass bits off of the kitchen floor.

Tubbo tried not to feel sick as he approached the familiar door. He tried not to think about the abuse he had endured here before. The abuse he thought he had *escaped* from.

Schlatt had seemed nicer today. Maybe it was a good day. Maybe Schlatt wouldn't hurt him.

Oh, who was he kidding? It was never a good day.

Still, Tubbo knew better than to reject Schlatt's invitation, so he took a deep breath and knocked on the door.

Tubbo's heart skipped a beat when he heard Schlatt's voice again. "Come on in."

Tubbo opened the door with sweaty palms and stepped inside, hoping that he had managed to create a calm façade.

Schlatt looked... better, for lack of a better word. Tubbo wasn't sure how to describe it. All of his physical features were the same, and Schlatt was still wearing a spotless suit. But there was something in the way Schlatt was holding himself, the way that Schlatt was smiling, that made Tubbo feel slightly more at ease.

Tubbo still kept his guard up.

"Hey, kid," Schlatt said, leaning against his chair casually, "Close the door behind you."

Tubbo complied, feeling vaguely like he was sealing his fate as the door clicked shut.

"You-you wanted something?" Tubbo asked, forcing his voice to stay steady.

Schlatt nodded, leaning forward. "Yeah, I wanted to ask your opinion about something."

Tubbo swallowed. "Yeah?"

“Mhmm,” Schlatt hummed, glancing down at a piece of paper on his desk, “What if I told you that I was going to retract Tommy’s exile? Do you think he’d actually be willing to leave Wilbur?”

Tubbo’s mind blanked. What the hell? Since when did Schlatt want to let Tommy back into Manberg? Tubbo knew for a fact that he had never *considered* doing anything like that the first time around.

Tubbo stared at Schlatt in shock before realizing that Schlatt was waiting for an answer.

“Well, um...” Tubbo hesitated. “He might not, actually, be willing to leave Wilbur, that is. Tommy’s stupidly loyal like that.”

Which made Tommy’s harsh words toward Tubbo all the worse. Tubbo had destroyed one of the strongest bonds imaginable when he had exiled Tommy.

He had to do it. Dream was going to destroy L’manberg otherwise. He could’ve found another way.

Schlatt seemed to ponder Tubbo’s words for a moment. “Yeah, that tracks,” he said grimly, “Do you think you could persuade him?”

Tubbo started and tried to formulate a response that didn’t involve revealing his treason to Schlatt. Or wait, did Schlatt already know? Better to play it safe than be sorry later.

“Well, I, I could try to track him down I guess. But I don’t even know...”

Schlatt chuckled, and Tubbo stopped abruptly. “Tubbo, I know what you’ve been up to.”

Tubbo froze. He couldn’t breathe. The world was pressing against him like the sides of that small box, and suddenly he was back on that stage. Schlatt was towering over him.

“What-what have I been up to?” Tubbo whispered, echoing his past self. He couldn’t breathe. He was going to die. Technoblade was going to shoot him full of fireworks and the world was going to explode in color while he *burned*—

A hand touched Tubbo’s back, and Tubbo jumped away, falling onto the ground. He was going to die, he was going to die, he was going to die...

“You’re safe,” Schlatt was saying, “Just try to breathe. *Please.*”

Tubbo forced himself to inhale between sobs. Schlatt kept muttering comforting things to him, and Tubbo didn’t understand what was going on. Wasn’t Schlatt trying to kill him?

Eventually, Tubbo realized that it wasn’t the festival, that he was in Schlatt’s office, and that he had a freaking panic attack in front of Schlatt.

Schlatt, who was staring at him with... concern?

Tubbo held his breath as Schlatt pinched the bridge of his nose. “*God*, that was so stupid of me. I’m so sorry, I wasn’t thinking, it didn’t occur to me...” Schlatt took a deep breath. “So, future, huh?”

Tubbo blinked. “Y-you too?”

Schlatt chuckled, standing to his feet. “Yep,” he said, “One day I’m watching Tommy finally stand up to Dream, and the next, I’m lying in my bed with a killer headache.”

As he pushed himself off the ground, Tubbo tried to wrap his mind around this. “You-you were there the whole time?”

Schlatt nodded.

“But why didn’t you come out?”

Schlatt snorted. “Yeah, like that would’ve gone over well. I couldn’t exactly use amnesia as a shield like Ghostbur did.”

That made sense. “Probably not,” Tubbo agreed. He hesitated, eyeing Schlatt suspiciously. “Why-why are you acting so nice all of a sudden?”

Schlatt frowned, staring past Tubbo for a moment. “Let’s just say that death was a bit of an eye opener.” He sighed, sat back down at his desk, and stared at the decree to remove Tommy’s exile. Tubbo thought he looked very tired all of a sudden. “Anyway, Tommy’s not safe with Wilbur, so that’s first on the list.”

Tubbo couldn’t stop himself from feeling like a huge weight had just been lifted off of his shoulders. He wasn’t going to be solely responsible for saving the world, for saving Tommy. He wouldn’t have to singlehandedly try to stop Wilbur, or Technoblade, or Schlatt.

Schlatt smiled, the strangeness of which still sent chills down Tubbo’s spine. “Don’t worry kid, I’ve got it from here.” He looked back down at his papers and paused. “Could you go tell Quackity that we have some TNT to dig up?”

Chapter End Notes

Both the boys have PTSD. Somebody give them a hug.

I’ll have a Schlatt interlude sometime in the next couple of chapters.

Hello My Name Is Chaos

Chapter Summary

Technoblade's voices had been acting up.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Technoblade's voices had been acting up.

Nothing really new, when you put it that way. The Chat always acted strangely in some way shape or form. But this time, the voices were acting *really* strange. Like *really* strange.

For instance, Technoblade had just been minding his own business, collecting supplies, when the voices suddenly started screaming at him.

AAH WHAT HAPPENED. HOW DID WE GET HERE. What's going on

Okay, so the voices were having an existential crisis. Strange, but Techno wasn't going to worry about it too much. He continued minding his own business, stocking up weapons, potions, enchanted books, and gapples.

When Technoblade returned to Pogtopia, the voices started acting up again, much to Technoblade's annoyance.

POGTOPIA??? WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?? TIMETRAVELBLADE. technotravel

"Chat, I did not time travel," Techno said exhaustedly, "I don't know what gave you that idea, but please calm yourselves."

The voices started obnoxiously whispering at the top of their lungs. *HE DOESN'T KNOW. PANIC*

Technoblade decided to continue ignoring them. The voices were acting strange, but he wasn't in the mood to question it.

Then, Wilbur approached Technoblade, looking a little ticked at something. Technoblade was weighing his options on whether or not he should ask his mentally unstable brother what was wrong, but his chat seemed to have other ideas.

ALIVEBUR!? SPARKY-SPARKY BOOM MAN! Traitor, he made a new government. AND THEN EXPLODED THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. WHERE'S TOMMY???

Techno now had no idea what the Chat was going on about, and he couldn't actually afford to speak to them out loud. He tried to send them an internal message to shut up while Wilbur told him about taking Tommy's communicator away.

The Chat ignored him. Techno wondered why he expected anything less.

*TYRANNICAL!! **PROTECT THE CHILD! LEAVE THE USELESS CHILD TO ROT.***

"You took Tommy's communicator away?" Techno asked, trying to think through the excessive shouting, "Isn't that some sort of violation?"

Wilbur pulled the device out for a moment before shoving it back into his pocket. "It's for his own good, Technoblade," Wilbur said darkly, "Tommy hasn't realized that trust could get him killed. Besides—" Wilbur flashed Techno a grin. "—this way he can't betray me."

*BLASPHEMY! **Fair enough.***

You know, Techno would be having an easier time of keeping his thoughts together if his voices would agree on something for a change.

"Wilbur, Tommy thinks the world of you," Techno said slowly, "I don't think he could betray you if he tried."

"That's what they all think, Technoblade!" Wilbur let out a crazed laugh and ran his fingers through his messy hair. "But they all end up betraying me anyway!" Wilbur took a deep breath. "I love Tommy, and he loves me," he muttered, almost as if he were reassuring himself, "He wouldn't betray me intentionally. This is just a precaution."

"Uh-huh," Technoblade said slowly, "Keep telling yourself that."

Wilbur scowled. "Dream's coming over tomorrow," he told Techno, "Make sure Tommy doesn't interfere too much."

*OH, DREAM, JUST FANTASTIC. **HAHA, WE DON'T OWE HIM ANY FAVORS THIS TIME.***

Technoblade just headed toward Tommy's room.

When Tommy gave him permission to come in, the voices went ballistic.

*RACooninnit. **THESEUS! GIVE THAT BOY SOME GAPPLES. WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS WRIST.***

Techno had no idea why the Chat kept comparing Tommy to a racoon. Or to an ancient Greek hero. Admittedly, both Tommy and Theseus had been exiled, but it was still a random thing for the Chat to think.

Just to spite the voices, Techno gave Tommy a potion instead of a gapple. Half of the Chat was deeply amused by this; the other half took it as a personal affront.

His chat started to get violent, however, when Tommy brought up Wilbur's behavior.

"This isn't the first time he's hurt me."

HOW DARE HE. NO WONDER HE FLINCHES SO MUCH. WAIT I THOUGHT THAT WAS JUST DREAM. AAAAAA THIS RUNS DEEPER THAN WE THOUGHT. BLOOD. Blood, blood, blood.

As usual, Techno pushed the voices aside. He was feeling plenty livid without the Chat calling for blood. Wilbur was his brother; Techno wouldn't try to kill him.

THERE WAS NOTHING STOPPING YOU FROM TRYING BEFORE

Techno wished he had any idea what the voices were talking about.

Tommy forced himself to stay calm.

Dream wasn't going to kill him. Dream was barely going to look at him. From what Tommy could remember from most of Dream's visits, Dream was mostly focused on encouraging Wilbur's violent tendencies. Tommy only ever got the attention directed toward him when he spoke up.

The current plan was to just keep his mouth shut. Should be easy enough. Tommy doesn't bother Dream. Dream doesn't bother him. Everybody is happy and none the wiser.

At first, the plan went off without a hitch. Technoblade eventually left the room, muttering something about a headache. Tommy bet it was those voices that future Technoblade had mentioned. Tommy wondered if they hated Dream as much as Tommy did.

Dream handed Wilbur some supplies while Tommy watched the proceedings carefully. He tried not to flinch when he saw Dream pull out another stack of TNT from his inventory. He forced his fingers to stay away from his armor straps.

"Put your armor in the hole, Tommy."

This wasn't exile. This wasn't Logstedshire. Dream wasn't going to hurt him; Wilbur wouldn't allow it.

"Tommy's been awfully quiet today," Dream said to Wilbur casually.

Tommy felt his heart speed up like a mine-cart gaining momentum, but he forced himself to not panic. This was a different Dream. This wasn't his Dream. Everything was fine.

"He has, hasn't he?" Wilbur said, smiling pleasantly at Tommy, "Thank you for finally behaving yourself, Tommy."

Simultaneously, warmth bloomed in his chest as Tommy fought away a grimace. He hated that he still wanted praise from his brother. He hated that he was so confused.

Dream turned to Tommy and tilted his head slightly, and Tommy forced himself to stare straight at the eyes on Dream's mask. He had nothing to fear. Dream couldn't hurt him here. Don't show weakness.

"Maybe when this is all said and done, Tommy won't get exiled again," Dream said calmly.

Tommy's blood froze, and he felt clamminess start to overcome him. To Wilbur, that might seem like a casual statement, a casual 'let's hope this never happens again.'

To Tommy, it was *so much* more.

"I should hope not," Wilbur said, "Since there won't be any Manberg to be exiled from, and I would *never* exile Tommy from Pogtopia."

Dream was still looking at Tommy, and Tommy clenched his fists and gritted his teeth. He needed to stay calm. He needed to act like nothing was different. It was just an offhand comment. It was just an offhand comment. This wasn't the same Dream.

"I'm going to go see where Techno went off to," Tommy muttered. He slowly backed away, unwilling to keep Dream out of his sight.

Dream smiled. "Why don't you stay?" he asked, "I thought you wanted to keep an eye on me?"

Tommy hated the way his body seized up, how he wanted go back, because *Dream was his friend, he was his friend, he was the only one who cared.*

And then there was Wilbur, staring at Tommy with a perplexed expression, and Tommy hated how he wanted to never leave his side, because *Wilbur was his brother, he was his brother, and he was the only one he could trust.*

God, this was so screwed up. For a terrifying moment, Tommy thought he was going to laugh over how screwed up it was.

C'mon Tommy, Tommy told himself, remembering what Techno had told him, *He doesn't have a home. He's homeless. Just think about Dream wet and alone in a dirt hut.*

Not that being homeless was funny, of course. Tommy had been practically homeless when he was exiled too. It was just nice to imagine Dream being in the same vulnerable position as Tommy had been for a change. And it was fun to piss him off.

Tommy managed to summon a weak smile. "You're homeless, you don't get to tell me what to do. I want to speak to Techno."

Tommy spun around and speed-walked down the hallway carved into the ravine. He forced himself not to break into a dead run when he heard Wilbur's hysterical laughter echo off of the walls.

When he heard Dream's laughter join Wilbur's, Tommy sprinted.

“Holy crap,” Quackity said, sticking another stack of TNT into his inventory, “This is a ton of TNT.”

Tubbo only nodded as he carefully extracted another block.

“Where did all of it come from?” Quackity continued, sounding almost hysterical, “Where did it all come from?”

“Wilbur,” Tubbo said noncommittally.

Quackity laughed. “Why would *Wilbur* want to destroy the entire country? Didn’t he want to rule the place?”

“Not if he’s lost his moral compass.” Tubbo shoved a block of TNT into his inventory more forcefully than usual. “Which might not have happened if Schlatt hadn’t *exiled* him.”

Quackity frowned. “Careful Tubbo,” he said, “Those are some pretty treasonous things you’re saying there.”

Tubbo clenched his fists tightly, digging his nails into his palms. “I’m sure Schlatt would agree with me, since he’s allowing Tommy back into L’man-Manberg and all.”

Quackity’s eyes widened. “What? He’s letting Tommy back?”

“Do you have a problem with that?” Tubbo asked sharply, “This is Tommy’s home. Keeping him out only causes problems for everybody.”

Logstedshire blown to pieces. A giant pole towering over Tubbo. Tommy back, alive, teamed up with Technoblade, screaming profanities at someone he used to call his best friend.

Quackity raised his arms in surrender. “No! I’m glad Tommy’s coming back, honest. I just want to know the whole picture. Is Wilbur coming too?”

Tubbo scoffed, trying not to think about Wilbur’s declining mental health that bordered on cruelty in Pogtopia. “Of course not. Didn’t I just say he planted all that TNT?”

Quackity’s eyes widened, as if he hadn’t just heard that from Tubbo minutes before. “Yeah, but… I thought Wilbur would rather die than see Manberg destroyed.”

Tubbo rubbed his eyes tiredly, a habit he picked up from the stress of being president. “Well, in his words, if he can’t have it, nobody can.”

Quackity let out another shocked laugh. “That’s—that’s so screwed man. What if we hadn’t found the explosives?”

“What do you think?” Tubbo asked, trying not to think about the gut-wrenching panic he felt as they world crumpled underneath him, how Phil put a sword through Wilbur, how Tommy screamed like his heart was being ripped out of his chest.

Quackity didn't have an answer. They continued digging up the TNT in silence.

Chapter End Notes

Me: i should work on my other WIPs

Also Me: Nah

Someone in the comments had the idea about the voices, but I'm too tired to figure out who at the moment. (Okay, future Molly here, [ProcrastinatorQueen](#) was the one to suggest the voices from the future.)

Glatt Gets Redemption

Chapter Summary

Schlatt saw a lot of things as a ghost.

Chapter Notes

Tw: explicit mentions of manipulation and abuse, suicidal thoughts (all canon stuff mostly)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Schlatt woke up as a ghost, he felt more refreshed than he had in ages.

It probably helped that his brain wasn't half fogged up by constant drinking or the pounding headache that would follow him every time he woke up. It also probably helped that he couldn't feel anything at all.

It was strange, but also strangely nice.

Nobody could see him, and Schlatt was fine with that. Why should he reveal himself to that merry band of traitors? They had desecrated his grave shamelessly; he didn't want anything to do with them.

Even he didn't understand why he still followed them around, watching their every move. If you had asked him at the time, he would've probably insisted that he looked forward to seeing them destroy themselves.

Seeing his enemies destroy themselves wasn't nearly as entertaining as Schlatt had expected it to be.

Wilbur was already dead; Schlatt hadn't returned as a ghost before that particular death. Still, Schlatt got to see Wilbur's amnesiac ghost, floating around like a happy six-year-old.

Meanwhile, the actual kids had been tasked with running the country.

When Schlatt had first realized that Tubbo was chosen to be president, he actually laughed out loud, not that anyone could hear him. Who in their right minds would chose *Tubbo* to be president? Sure, he was well-meaning enough, but the fact remained that Tubbo was a doormat, not to mention a literal child.

Who trusted their nation to be in the hands of a child who couldn't say no to anyone?

Then Schlatt realized that it was Wilbur who chose Tubbo, right after he choose *Tommy*, who actually found the maturity to reject the role. After that, the joke seemed a little less funny. Schlatt didn't understand why. It should've been *hilarious*. Maybe everyone's stupidity was so ridiculous it simply *couldn't* be funny.

Schlatt *did* laugh when Tommy and Ranboo robbed and burned George's house as a bonding exercise.

Schlatt stopped laughing when Dream started building obsidian walls around the country. Schlatt shouldn't even care anymore, but *he* was the one to take down *Wilbur's* stupid walls, and Dream had no right to make new ones.

At first, the idea of Tommy being exiled again was mildly hilarious, almost like the universe was actively working against the kid.

The hilarity faded when Tommy told Tubbo not to be the next Schlatt, and Tubbo balked before telling Tommy not to be the next Wilbur. And suddenly, Schlatt actually had to wonder how much he hurt this kid.

Who was he kidding, he publicly executed Tubbo. What was Schlatt even thinking, having a teenager killed like that?

The traitor excuse was falling flatter and flatter each time Schlatt thought about it.

Quackity became the new vice president, but Schlatt knew he wouldn't be satisfied with that role. Quackity wouldn't be satisfied until he had complete control. He and Schlatt were similar in that regard.

Little did Tubbo know, Quackity may as well have gained that control when he stepped up as Tubbo's second-in-command. Quackity was more forceful than Tubbo ever could be, and it showed.

Meanwhile, exile hadn't been treating Tommy well.

Poor, amnesiac Ghostbur had tried to make the situation as accommodating as possible, but it definitely didn't help when Ghostbur couldn't even remember that Tommy wasn't on vacation.

Dream certainly did not improve matters.

Schlatt was very familiar in the ways one could exercise control over someone else, probably because Schlatt used to be the controller.

Tubbo was laughably easy to control. The kid was so afraid to say no, all that was really necessary to get him to say yes was to make any show of force. Of course, if you showed too much force, you could turn the kid against you.

That was Schlatt's particular downfall.

People like Quackity had the perfect balance to wear down people like Tubbo. He would forcefully project his ideals and his ideas until Tubbo saw them as his own, or simply didn't want to refuse.

That sort of method didn't work on people like Tommy. Tommy was too willful, too full of fire. Harsh words didn't put him down, as a matter of fact, they only tended to rile him up more.

The best, and possibly only, way to control Tommy was to earn his loyalty.

Schlatt wasn't stupid. He could connect the dots. It was obvious that Wilbur had manipulated and abused Tommy. But Wilbur had already gained Tommy's loyalty, manipulating him from there couldn't have been very hard.

Dream, on the other hand, had to start from scratch, worse than scratch really. Tommy saw Dream as the enemy, and rightfully so.

In life, Schlatt might have admired the twistedly elegant way that Dream broke Tommy down until the teen was a shadow of his former self.

As a ghost, Schlatt wanted nothing more than to punch Dream in the face. And he tried. Sadly, it seemed that being completely undetected by the living was not Schlatt's choice, but his curse.

Schlatt wondered how he started getting so protective of the kids he would've gladly killed only a month ago.

Things only got worse when Dream discovered Tommy's secret stash, and Schlatt could only watch as Logstedshire was completely destroyed, leaving Tommy even more broken and alone than before.

Schlatt could only yell truths at Tommy soundlessly as Tommy stood on top of that tower, ready for his final rebellion.

And maybe miracles did exist after all, because just when Schlatt thought Tommy was going to actually jump, Tommy suddenly realized what Dream had been doing to him all along. Still, Schlatt let out a metaphorical sigh of relief only *after* Tommy was safely situated under Techno's house like a racoon.

Meanwhile, Tubbo, Quackity, Fundy, and Ranboo set out on a quest to kill Technoblade. They put Philza under house arrest in the process, and Schlatt couldn't help but to feel bad for the man who was only ever trying to protect his son.

The more vindictive side of Schlatt thought it served him right for only visiting Tommy *once* while in exile.

Schlatt couldn't bring himself to be surprised when Technoblade didn't actually get killed. He was a little relieved, actually. Tubbo was too young to have that sort of blood on his hands.

Schlatt *could* bring himself to be surprised when Technoblade showed Tommy his room full of wither skulls. Because, *damn*, that was a lot of future withers.

Tommy and Tubbo's reunion was painful to watch. That's all Schlatt really had to say on the subject.

Tommy's confrontation of Dream was simultaneously the most frightening and the most satisfying thing Schlatt had ever seen.

Still, Schlatt was *this* close to stabbing Technoblade when he brought up the favor.

And suddenly, Schlatt woke up with a pounding headache and severe nausea. He stumbled out of bed, looked at the date, and it wasn't exactly hard to connect the dots from there.

Of course, he had time traveled. He needed a drink.

He found Tubbo in a kitchen full of empty glass bottles and shattered glass all over the floor. Schlatt had no memory of this happening in the past, but maybe it had been drowned out in extra booze.

Well, there was no time like the present to get sober, he supposed.

Now, Schlatt was very good at powering through hangover, so he actually managed to get through his conversation with Tubbo with relative ease.

Things made a lot more sense when Schlatt realized Tubbo was also a time traveler, but it had to make him wonder. Was it just him and Tubbo? Or were there more people from the future that had suddenly found themselves in the past?

It didn't matter. Right now, Schlatt needed to focus on getting Tommy away from Wilbur. The others were digging up the actual TNT. Schlatt would get Tommy out, kick Wilbur and Dream's butts, and get both Tommy and Tubbo therapy. Easy.

Schlatt snorted. Yeah, if everything were that easy, Schlatt probably wouldn't be in this mess in the first place.

Chapter End Notes

And that closes the adventures of Schlatt as a ghost. We shall return to Tommy in the next chapter, as well as explore some of the lovely symptoms of withdraw.

Hope you enjoyed! :)

Oop Meddling Messages

Chapter Summary

This hadn't happened last time. This had most definitely not happened last time. Tubbo had not betrayed him for Schlatt last time.

"Don't you see, Tommy?" Wilbur asked, plucking Tommy's communicator out of his hands, "Tubbo doesn't care about you."

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy wasn't all that surprised when he couldn't find Techno. Technoblade was never one for staying put in Pogtopia. More likely than not, he was busy in his secret base.

Tommy *would've* gone to the secret base, really. He was sure Techno had plenty of gapples hidden in there, and after his interaction with Dream, Tommy could *really* use some gapples. But he couldn't remember exactly where the base was, and even if he did, the idea of accidentally running into Dream on his way out was too much for Tommy to bear.

So instead, Tommy pulled out a pickaxe and began digging. He wasn't sure where he was going, as a matter of fact, he was pretty sure he wasn't going anywhere. He just needed a distraction. He needed something to pull his mind away from Dream, and Wilbur, and the god-forsaken mess he was in.

Unfortunately, the monotony of his actions only seemed to make his thoughts louder.

Dream laughed at the homeless comment, had he heard it before? No, Dream just thought it was funny. *He didn't think it was funny when Techno said it.* Well, maybe Dream had a better sense of humor before he exiled Tommy. *Dream mentioned Tommy being exiled again.* Dream was just saying things. He wasn't referencing Tommy's actual exile.

Tommy willed himself to breathe as he forced his pickaxe to break through the stone. *Dream wasn't here. He couldn't hurt him.*

Tommy whispered the words like a mantra as he continued to mine. "Dream isn't here. He can't hurt me."

He swung again, and his pickaxe broke. Tommy's heart skipped a beat as he let out a surprised yelp.

"Jumping at shadows?"

Tommy jumped and spun around. Wilbur stood at the entrance of Tommy's man-made cave, surveying the scene in front of him.

Tommy felt his panic tie a rope around his lungs as he struggled to breathe. *Wilbur was here. He could hurt him.*

Don't be ridiculous. Wilbur was his brother. Tommy should be grateful that he was even alive. Tommy should be glad that he wasn't Ghostbur, who couldn't remember anything sad for more than a few minutes. Tommy should be grateful, so why did he feel so afraid?

"Tommy?" Wilbur asked, sounding worried.

Dream would sound worried too.

Tommy tried to speak. "I-I—"

He couldn't think; it was like smoke had suffocated his thoughts. For a moment, Tommy thought he saw Dream standing over him. But no, it was Wilbur. Was that any better?

Wilbur grabbed him by the arms, and Tommy immediately jerked away. Wilbur didn't let go, instead holding on all the more tightly. It hurt.

"Tommy." Wilbur's voice was stern, and Tommy's body seized up. His breathing didn't slow. Tommy screwed up, and now he was going to hurt him, and Tommy would deserve it, because he's so pathetic and useless and—

"Tommy, pull yourself together or *so help me*," Wilbur said, his voice sharper this time.

Tommy stopped breathing altogether.

Wilbur smiled. "Good," he said. His face returned to a stern expression. "Now breathe."

Tommy let out a shuddering breath, staring at the dirty stone floor of the cave. He didn't want to see Wilbur's face, didn't want to watch it shift from joy to anger at a drop of a hat.

Wilbur slowly released his iron grip on Tommy's arms and slowly began to card his fingers through Tommy's hair. Tommy melted into the touch.

"Oh Toms," Wilbur whispered softly.

Wilbur grabbed Tommy by the chin and yanked his head up. A jolt went down Tommy's spine at the motion, but he forced himself not to tremble, looking straight into Wilbur's crazed, but soft, brown eyes. This was his brother. Wilbur might hurt him, but Tommy shouldn't be afraid of him.

"Dream really scared you, didn't he?" Wilbur's voice was condescending, like he was speaking to a five-year-old. Tommy hated it.

"I wasn't scared," Tommy said stubbornly.

They both knew he was lying.

“Okay,” Wilbur said gently, “Dream’s gone now. Why don’t you give me all of those materials you’ve collected? Then, you can take the rest of the day off.”

Tommy obediently handed all of his ore to Wilbur, and he had to resist the impulse to add his armor to the pile of stuff. Wilbur wasn’t Dream. Wilbur didn’t want to destroy Tommy’s armor. Wilbur just wanted the materials for the upcoming war.

Wilbur smiled and led Tommy back toward the main ravine. Tommy jerked forward when Wilbur stopped suddenly, grabbing Tommy tightly by the shoulder.

“And Tommy?” Wilbur was smiling that creepy smile of his, and Tommy felt a sudden stab of fear in his chest. “I have proof that we can’t trust Tubbo.”

“What?” Tommy’s shaky voice was hardly louder than a whisper. He hated how pathetic he sounded. Tommy forced himself to speak more boldly. “Wilbur, Tubbo is my friend!”

“Then what do you make of this?” Wilbur shoved Tommy’s communicator into his hands. Tommy fumbled with it for a moment, peering down at the messages on the screen.

Tubbo: Schlatt’s trying his best, I think things are going to change for the better around here.

Tubbo: I’m sorry.

Tommy stared at the messages, his mouth suddenly feeling very dry. “What the hell?” he whispered.

This hadn’t happened last time. This had most definitely not happened last time. Tubbo had not betrayed him for *Schlatt* last time.

“Don’t you see, Tommy?” Wilbur asked, plucking Tommy’s communicator out of his hands, “Tubbo doesn’t care about you.”

“But-but—” Tommy muttered, trying to think past the shock. “I don’t understand.”

Why would Tubbo do this? Why on earth would Tubbo side with Schlatt? Schlatt had never treated Tubbo kindly; Tubbo shouldn’t want anything to do with him. What had changed?

Had Tommy been launched into an alternate dimension? One where Tubbo was a traitor and Technoblade suddenly cared about how Wilbur was treating Tommy? An alternate dimension where Dream acted slightly more creepily than usual?

Or was Tommy not the only one who time traveled? That still wouldn’t explain why Tubbo betrayed him, unless Tubbo really was the monster that Technoblade made him out to be.

“He’s betrayed us,” Wilbur said, laughter bubbling from his lips, “Plain and simple. You can’t trust anyone Tommy. I’m the only one you can trust.”

Tommy wanted to get away, but Wilbur still hadn't let go of his shoulder. He was stuck. Stuck in Pogtopia. Stuck with Wilbur. Stuck in the past, or whatever it was.

Tommy knew what Wilbur was waiting for him to say, so Tommy forced the damned words out of his mouth. "You're the only one I can trust."

He hated this, he hated this, he hated this. He hated how Wilbur smiled slightly victoriously at the words, how he raised a single eyebrow and said, "And?"

Tommy scrambled to think of what else Wilbur would want him to say, and chose the safest option.

"I can't trust Tubbo."

Wilbur let go of Tommy's shoulder. "I tried to warn you," he said, sounding sincere, unlike Dream.

"I know," Tommy said shortly, walking briskly toward his room. He shut the door loudly behind him, and tried not to notice the way his eyes burned.

He hated this place.

Tubbo's second day in the past was fairly uneventful. But then again, Tubbo's definition of eventful involved explosions of some kind, so uneventful was actually a rather good thing.

The day started with Schlatt promptly telling basically everyone to take the day off, and everyone else to stay away from his office.

"Don't worry about me," he told them when both Tubbo and Quackity expressed their alarm, "I'm just feeling a little under the weather, and you two deserve a day off after all that TNT digging you did yesterday."

Tubbo couldn't exactly argue with that one. His arms *were* pretty sore from all that work, but it was worth it. At least Tubbo could sleep soundly in his bed knowing that there was no TNT underneath the ground for the time being.

And Schlatt *did* look sick. There was a sheen of sweat on his forehead, and his arms couldn't seem to stop shaking.

Tubbo was tempted to just take the day to go straight to Pogtopia and drag Tommy out, but it was clear that Schlatt had already accounted for that.

"You're staying in Manberg," Schlatt told Tubbo, "I don't want you going on any rescue missions."

"What makes you think I would do that?" Tubbo asked, trying to sound confused.

Schlatt laughed. “Just spend some time with Niki or something. I promise, I’ll get Tommy as soon as possible, but I don’t want you to put yourself in arms reach of that maniac.”

They both knew he was talking about Wilbur.

After Fundy stopped him from sneaking off, Tubbo very reluctantly decided to listen to Schlatt and stay in Manberg.

The Niki idea wasn’t half bad, actually, so Tubbo headed straight to her shop. It was strange, walking through Manberg. He was used to the bridges of the reconstructed L’manberg, and now he was walking on normal paths.

When Tubbo reached Niki’s bakery, he practically salivated at the delicious smell of baked goods. His stomach growled in hunger, and Tubbo realized that he had forgotten to eat breakfast that morning.

Tubbo was used to skipping meals; it was an occupational hazard of being president of an entire nation. Still, he knew he shouldn’t make a habit of it, especially now that he was only Secretary of State.

Better late than never, he supposed as he pushed open the door.

When the cute little bell chimed upon Tubbo’s entry, Niki looked up from the counter and smiled gently.

“Hey Tubbo!” she said brightly.

Tubbo waved back, smiling tiredly in return. “Hello, Niki,” he replied, “How are you?”

“I’m doing well, thank you!” Niki played with a bit of her hair. “J’schlatt apologized to me the other day and lowered my taxes, so that was a pleasant surprise. I’m still not sure how I feel about him, but it’s good to see that he knows what he did was wrong.”

“Yeah,” Tubbo said, not sure what else to say.

He spent most of the day with Niki, but the idea of Tommy trapped with Wilbur in Pogtopia didn’t leave his mind. Eventually, he pulled out his communicator. Why didn’t he think of this sooner? It feels like the obvious move now.

Tubbo: Hey, Tommy how are you doing?

Tubbo: I have some really good news. J’schlatt is going to revoke your exile! You can come back and stay!

Tubbo: This probably seems sudden, haha

Tubbo: Schlatt’s trying his best, I think things are going to change for the better around here.

An hour passed, and Tommy still didn’t reply. Anxiety churned in Tubbo’s gut, and he quickly began typing again.

Tubbo: ...Tommy? Are you alright?

Tubbo: Did I say something to upset you?

Tubbo: I'm sorry.

Tubbo: Tommy, please answer I'm getting worried.

Tubbo was safely back at home when he finally got a reply. Tubbo's heart raced as he read it.

TommyInnit: Screw you, you damn traitor.

Tubbo's heart dropped. Didn't Tommy read the part about being allowed back into Manberg? Did he simply not care? Had Wilbur already corrupted him?

Tubbo: I'm not a traitor. Schlatt's changed, I swear. He's not the same man as before.

No reply.

Tubbo scowled. There was no way Tommy would say that. Sure, the Tommy from his time had said some pretty hurtful things to Tubbo, but Tubbo hadn't exiled him in this timeline. Tubbo had literally just told him Tommy could come home from exile.

Tubbo knew that Wilbur had to be behind this somehow. Maybe Tommy was the one who typed those words, but Wilbur had to be the one whispering them in Tommy's ear.

Right?

Regardless, Tubbo couldn't allow Tommy to spend another moment with Wilbur, not while he was like this.

Schlatt had wanted him to stay in Manberg, but Tubbo *needed* to do this. Fundy might've stopped him from going to Tommy before, but that was in broad daylight. Night was fast approaching, and Tubbo could use that as a cover to get to Pogtopia without anyone noticing. He could grab Tommy, explain the misunderstanding, and get home before morning.

Tubbo wouldn't fail Tommy again.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter evolved in ways that I did not foresee while simultaneously staying within the confines of my outline. Good job chapter.

I can no longer make promises about who's point of view I will manage to get to in the next chapter, so...probably Tommy or Tubbo, maybe Schlatt.

Anyway, thank you for reading! I hope you enjoyed. :)

Did this Rescue Have A Plan?

Chapter Summary

It stung to see Tommy so desperate to get away from him, but Tubbo pushed through the lump in his throat.

“I’m not a traitor,” he said.

Tommy scoffed. “Nice try, Tubbo, but if you wanted to pull that card, maybe you shouldn’t have sent me messages all but confessing that you’re moving to Schlatt’s side.”

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tubbo’s footsteps were quiet on the grass as he quickly ran away from Manberg. He could hear the familiar sound of mobs surrounding him, and he clutched onto his sword for comfort.

He could’ve attempted to take his underground tunnel into Pogtopia, but Tubbo had a feeling that either Schlatt or Wilbur had sealed it off at this point. Schlatt because he didn’t want Tubbo to put himself in danger. Wilbur because he and Tommy thought Tubbo was a traitor.

The reminder of the misunderstanding only made Tubbo run through the forest faster. The cold, night air burned at Tubbo’s lungs, but he didn’t care. He needed to get to Tommy.

I’m coming Tommy.

The further away he got from Manberg, the louder Tubbo allowed himself to become. His feet crashed into the ground. His haste caused him to stumble, but Tubbo refused to slow down. When a skeleton stepped into his path, Tubbo weaved around it and ran past the mob.

The closer he got to Pogtopia, the more his mind raced through the possibilities.

What if Tommy refused to come? What if Wilbur stopped him? What if Technoblade was there?

Tubbo almost skidded to a halt when he thought about Technoblade. *What if Technoblade was there?*

As he forced himself to keep moving, Tubbo’s heart seemed to be screaming as it beat faster and faster. Technoblade wouldn’t be there. Technoblade was almost never there. And even if

Techno was there, Tubbo would just sneak past him. No harm, no foul. Nothing would happen.

Tubbo skidded to a halt when he recognized the hidden entrance to Pogtopia. Very carefully and quietly, Tubbo dug away the dirt covering the entrance. He peeked inside. Nobody was there.

Repressing a sigh of relief (it would've been too loud), Tubbo lightly stepped into the entrance room. He winced when his sneakers made a light sound on the stone. Every sound felt ten times louder than usual.

Tubbo took off his sneakers and stuck them into his inventory. His feet were frostier now that his socks were the only thing protecting him from the cold stone, but at least he didn't make a noise every time he took a step forward.

Tubbo slowly crept down the stairs, glad that they were stone. If they were wooden, they might've made a rather incriminating creaking sound. With stone, everything was deathly silent, with the exception of Tubbo's breathing.

Tubbo wondered if there were a way to quiet his breathing. He experimented with taking deeper and shallower breaths, and decided that natural breathing was the quietest.

Too bad Tubbo's stress of being caught was making natural breathing quite difficult.

As Tubbo approached the bottom of the stairs, he could hear Wilbur's crazed voice echoing from farther down the ravine. He froze. Then, he realized that he was too exposed on the stairs, and he hurried down as quietly as he could manage.

Technoblade's voice joined the echoes, and it took everything Tubbo had not to turn around and run in the opposite direction. Where was the confidence he had when he came knocking on Technoblade's door for execution?

He had more power then. He had friends at his back. Now, Tubbo was terribly alone.

The voices grew louder as Tubbo scurried toward the hallway that lead to Tommy's room. Tubbo vaguely wondered if Wilbur and Techno were arguing about something.

Good. Arguing was good. Arguing meant that they wouldn't notice Tubbo sneak Tommy out of Pogtopia. Hopefully.

Techno's voice raised volume, and Tubbo could hear "*hurting*" "*wrong*" echo off the walls.

Wilbur's voice raised into an incomprehensible shriek, and Tubbo felt his heart practically leap out of his body. He broke into a reckless sprint. He needed to get to Tommy. Tommy wasn't safe. *He needed—*

Tubbo froze when a door a few yards ahead slammed open. Suddenly, he could hear Technoblade's voice very clearly.

"I'm not betraying you, Wilbur. I'm still with you. I'm just being honest."

Tubbo was a statue as Technoblade stepped into the hallway, slamming the door closed behind him and muffling the expletives that Wilbur started firing off.

Technoblade hadn't noticed Tubbo yet. Instead, he was staring down the opposite direction of the hallway, toward Tommy's room. Tubbo could still hide, but he couldn't make himself move.

"Chat, I think I need to give him some space." Technoblade spun around. "Oh, don't give me —"

Tubbo's blood froze as Technoblade's eyes landed on Tubbo.

Run, run, run, run, run, run. "I'll try to make this as painless as possible." So many colors, they burn, they burn, they burn.

Technoblade took a couple of steps toward Tubbo, but Tubbo's feet were glued to the floor. He was trapped. Walls held him from all sides. He couldn't move. He *couldn't move*.

"Tubbo? What are you—"

*Move, run, move, run, run, move, move, move—*Tubbo's feet pushed off the ground, and he sprinted toward Technoblade. *He was so close to Tommy, if he could run past—*

Technoblade swiftly stepped out of the way and grabbed Tubbo by the arms. Tubbo didn't dare scream; Wilbur still didn't know he was here, and he wanted to keep it that way. Still, that didn't stop him from squirming, kicking, punching himself out of Technoblade's grasp.

Technoblade's hold didn't loosen, and the adrenaline slowly drained out of Tubbo's body. Hopelessness seeped into his bones. This was the end. Now Techno would get Wilbur, and they would probably kill him, and then Tommy would be trapped in Pogtopia forever.

Tubbo *failed*.

He flinched when Technoblade leveled him with a serious expression.

"What's going on?" Techno asked, "Wilbur said you're a traitor. What are you doing here?"

The air was almost gone from Tubbo's lungs, and when he forced the words out, they sounded more like the faint whisper of a dying man. "I'm not a traitor. I want to see Tommy. To explain."

He didn't look Technoblade in the eyes, didn't want to see if Techno's voices were raging inside his head, demanding Tubbo's blood, demanding that Tubbo go off with a bang. Instead, he stared at the ground, stared at his dirty, white socks, stared at Technoblade's nice but worn boots.

Technoblade let out a sigh. "Explain to me, and I'll decide if you can go see Tommy."

That made sense. If Tubbo were a traitor, allowing him to see Tommy was a good way to get Tommy killed.

“Schlatt’s changed. He’s different. He’s not the same.”

Tubbo’s words came out in a rush, but they never changed volume, as if Tubbo’s vocal chords knew the consequences of being heard by anyone other than Technoblade. In reality, Tubbo probably didn’t have the air to speak louder than a whisper.

“Those are all very synonymous,” Techno said dryly, “but continue.”

“He wants to let Tommy back into Manberg. He feels bad. He wants to take Tommy away from Wilbur. He knows Wilbur is too dangerous.” Tubbo was saying too much. Technoblade wouldn’t like him incriminating Wilbur like this, but he couldn’t get himself to stop. “He’s apologized to Niki, I think he’s stopped drinking, he dug up all of the TNT—”

Stop speaking, stop speaking, Tubbo stop speaking.

Technoblade’s hands squeezed Tubbo’s arms more tightly. “How would he know about the TNT?”

Tubbo didn’t answer.

“Tubbo.”

Tubbo flinched. “Please,” Tubbo whispered, “Please let me save Tommy. He’s not safe here, he’s being manipulated, he’s hurt, he—”

“Okay, okay, I get it.” Technoblade let go of Tubbo. Tubbo looked up at him in shock.

“What—?”

“You can go to Tommy,” Technoblade muttered, massaging his forehead.

Confusion pounded at Tubbo’s skull, demanding answers even as his instincts demanded that he flee. “But I thought—”

“Listen, I’m pretty annoyed about the TNT, not going to lie,” Technoblade said, “But I care about Tommy.” He grimaced and let out a hiss. “Just get out of here; I’m getting a headache.”

Needing no other prompt, Tubbo sprinted down the hall toward Tommy’s room before Technoblade changed his mind and decided to kill him.

He carelessly slammed the door open, and in the darkness of the bedroom, Tubbo saw Tommy’s form sit up suddenly.

“Tubbo?” Tommy whispered, “Are you really here?”

Tubbo stumbled forward, trying to ignore the burning in his eyes and throat. “Yeah, yeah, it’s me.”

When Tubbo got close enough, Tommy grabbed onto Tubbo’s shirt. Tubbo stiffened. Was Tommy mad? Did he need comfort?

“You feel real,” Tommy muttered, sounding slightly delirious.

Oh. *Oh*.

Tubbo gently grabbed Tommy’s hand. “I am real,” he choked out, “I’m right here.”

Tommy squeezed Tubbo’s hand so tightly that it hurt, but Tubbo didn’t mind. Tommy was *here*, and he was *alive*, and now Tubbo could save him.

“But Dream said—”

Tubbo stiffened. What was this about Dream? Had Dream hurt Tommy in Pogtopia? Tommy had never told him about that. Maybe it was just a nightmare.

Tommy looked confused for a moment before he too stiffened. A startled noise escaped Tubbo as Tommy yanked his hand away from him like it burned.

“Damnit, damnit, *damnit*,” Tommy muttered, shuffling away from Tubbo, “What are you doing here?”

It stung to see Tommy so desperate to get away from him, but Tubbo pushed through the lump in his throat.

“I’m not a traitor,” he said.

Tommy scoffed. “Nice try, Tubbo, but if you wanted to pull that card, maybe you shouldn’t have sent me messages all but confessing that you’re moving to Schlatt’s side.”

That stung. “What about Schlatt taking your exile away?” Tubbo asked, “Does that mean nothing to you?”

Tommy gave Tubbo a perplexed look. “What do you mean, take my exile away? Are you sure you haven’t hit your head or something? Schlatt was the one who exiled me, remember?”

Tubbo shook his head frantically, even as confusion threatened to overcome him. Hadn’t Tommy read his message? Had it not gone through?

“Schlatt’s revoking your exile,” Tubbo said quickly, reaching for his communicator, “I told you this.”

Tommy crossed his arms and shook his head. “No, you didn’t.”

Tubbo frowned as he opened up his messages to Tommy. “Well, maybe I didn’t *tell* you, but I sent you a message.” He handed the communicator to Tommy.

Tommy let out a snort as he glanced down at the messages. “Yeah, I think I would remember...” He froze. When he next spoke, his voice came out as a pained whisper. “What?”

“See?” Tubbo said, “I messaged you. Schlatt’s had a change of heart. Did you not see it? Maybe there’s something wrong—”

“There’s nothing wrong,” Tommy interrupted, sounding suddenly resigned as he stared at Tubbo’s communicator, “with the communicator, at least.”

Well, that provided no answers whatsoever.

“Well, what else could be the problem?”

“Wilbur has my communicator,” Tommy whispered, “He showed me only two of the messages, and well, it all seemed to point to you betraying us.”

The implications were deafening.

And for the first time that night, Tubbo’s fear was replaced with simmering anger. “He *took* your communicator?”

Tommy flinched, and Tubbo forced himself to calm down.

“Does that mean... that message you sent?” Tubbo asked, hating himself for hoping that Wilbur had sent the message, hoping that Tommy didn’t hate him after all.

“I didn’t send it,” Tommy confirmed quietly, “I-it must’ve been Wilbur.”

Tubbo could hardly believe it. Wilbur *took* Tommy’s communicator, *deleted* messages, and then *posed* as Tommy? Tubbo knew that Wilbur wasn’t acting like himself, he *knew* that, but this was to such an extreme that Tubbo couldn’t help but to be shocked.

“I should’ve known,” Tommy said, his voice getting an angry edge to it.

Tubbo felt panic begin to creep in. Because when Tommy was angry, he got *loud*.

“Tommy—”

“No, Tubbo!” Tommy leapt out of bed, standing unsteadily on his feet. “I knew that he would try something like this, and I believed everything he said!”

“You couldn’t have known,” Tubbo said desperately, keeping his voice in a hushed whisper, “You couldn’t have known that he would try—”

“But I *did* know!” Tommy shouted, his voice sounding ragged, “I did know that he was manipulating me! And I still fell for it!”

“Tommy, shut up!” Tubbo frantically glanced at the door. Wilbur hadn’t come knocking yet, which was a miracle, considering how loud Tommy was being.

Astoundingly enough, Tommy stopped talking altogether. As a matter of fact, he curled in on himself slightly and sat down on the creaking bed.

“I’m sorry,” Tubbo said, “But I don’t want to be caught.”

“You’re right,” Tommy whispered, “I’m too loud.”

Dread doused Tubbo like a bucket of ice water. “No, I didn’t mean it like that, I just—”

“It’s alright.” Tommy leaned back slightly and let out a shuddering sigh. “I’m just, I’m so *sick* of being manipulated like I’m someone’s plaything.”

What did that mean? Obviously, Wilbur was manipulating Tommy, but the way Tommy said it, he was implying that someone else had manipulated him. Tubbo slowly sat down on the bed next to Tommy.

“What—”

The door suddenly opened with a loud bang. Tubbo and Tommy jumped at the sound. Tubbo twisted around and felt his heart drop into his stomach.

Wilbur was standing in the doorway, looking like rage incarnate.

Wilbur let out a creepy giggle, and Tubbo stiffened. He thinks Tommy might’ve too. “Well, well. Who do we have here?”

Before Tubbo could move, before he could say *anything*, Wilbur had already grabbed Tubbo by the arm and *yanked* him off the bed. Tubbo let out a startled cry that quickly turned into one of pain as Wilbur slammed him against the wall.

“Wilbur!” Tommy cried out, “Let him go!”

Wilbur silenced him with a glare before turning back to face Tubbo. “So, why has the little traitor decided to grace our presence? Here to spread lies to my baby brother?”

Tubbo tried not to quake under Wilbur’s glare. It was hard to believe that this man and Ghostbur were even remotely the same person. That’s probably why Ghostbur insisted against the concept.

“I’m not a traitor,” Tubbo insisted. It felt like a lie. Technically, he was betraying Wilbur. “I’m trying to help!”

Wilbur reached into his coat. Tubbo saw a flash of silver before feeling the surface of a blade against his neck.

“Wilbur!” Tommy shouted. He ran to Wilbur and grabbed him by the arm, but Wilbur shoved him away.

“Tommy, *shut up*,” Wilbur growled through gritted teeth.

For the second time that evening, Tommy hunched in on himself and became suddenly silent.

Fear choked at Tubbo while Wilbur twirled his knife around millimeters away from Tubbo's throat.

"Give me one good reason why I shouldn't kill you right now."

Tubbo frantically searched for the words, frantically tried to think of something, but he came up short. What was he supposed to say? *I'm trying to protect Tommy from you.* Yeah, like that would go over well.

"I haven't *done* anything," Tubbo finally pleaded, "Please, I haven't done anything wrong."

Wilbur laughed, sending a shudder down Tubbo's spine. "Do you hear him? 'He hasn't done anything wrong.' That's cute."

"He hasn't," Tommy said, "He hasn't done any—"

"Why won't you listen to me, Tommy?" Wilbur snapped, "Why can't I get it through that thick skull of yours? Tubbo is a *traitor*. You can't trust anything he says."

Tommy flinched back so violently that he actually took a couple of steps backward. The movement only sent another pang into Tubbo's chest. What had Wilbur done to his best friend?

"I—" Tommy began weakly, but Wilbur cut him off again.

"Tommy, let me just deal with this traitor, and then we can have a cozy night. You would like that, wouldn't you?"

This time, Wilbur's voice was sweet, welcoming. For probably the twentieth time that day, Tubbo felt confused. Why was Wilbur's mood shifting so quickly? He had gone from yelling at Tommy to treating him lovingly. How did that even work?

Tubbo vaguely remembered seeing this behavior from Wilbur during the time he stayed in Pogtopia, but never to such a degree.

And he had most certainly *never* seen Tommy look so broken over the words.

"Wilbs," Tommy began. He grimaced before standing a little taller. "I can't trust you either," Tommy said loudly, like he was afraid he wouldn't be heard, "You lied to me. You deleted the messages."

Hot fury flashed across Wilbur's face, and for a horrible moment, Tubbo thought he was going to take the knife and kill Tommy. Instead, his face melted into a smile.

"Oh, Toms," Wilbur practically cooed, "You're so naïve."

Tommy looked like he had been hit.

Wilbur grabbed Tubbo by the collar of his shirt, and Tubbo tried (and failed) to resist as Wilbur dragged him closer to Tommy.

“Don’t you see?” Wilbur asked, the condescending nature of his tone returning its original mania, “It was a trick, a trap, a pretty little lie.”

Tubbo gasped as Wilbur dug the blade of the knife into his neck. The pain was agonizing, but Tubbo forced himself not to move a muscle.

Tommy also hadn’t moved an inch, and Tubbo wondered if he felt as terrified as Tubbo did.

“Tubbo was lying!” Wilbur continued, “Schlatt doesn’t want to revoke your exile! He wants to lure you in. He wants to let you think you’re safe, and once you’re in his clutches—”

Wilbur dug the knife in deeper, and Tubbo let out an actual cry. Tears burned at the corners of his eyes, and Tubbo hated himself for showing such a pathetic display of weakness in front of Tommy.

Speaking of whom, Tommy had pressed his back against the wall, as if Wilbur was putting the knife to *his* throat, and not Tubbo’s.

“—he’ll kill you!” Wilbur continued, his voice growing more and more hysterical by the minute, “Schlatt’ll torture you and give you a public execution, all just to get to me! He wants to see me suffer, so he’ll take advantage of your naiveté, of your innocence, to do it!”

That wasn’t true; Tubbo *knew* it wasn’t true.

But a part of him would never forget going up on that stage, thinking the only thing he’d have to worry about was Wilbur blowing up the entire festival, and instead getting publicly executed with a blast of fireworks.

Tommy opened and closed his mouth, as if he were trying to form the words that refused to come.

“So now I’ll kill his precious Secretary of State,” Wilbur whispered close to Tubbo’s ear. Wilbur let out a burst of laughter and returned to normal volume. “Now, he’ll be the one that suffers when he hears what happened to the little traitor—”

“Please,” Tommy choked out. Tubbo noticed that tears were rolling down his face. Tubbo felt his own salty tears following suit. “Don’t kill him.”

“This isn’t your call, Tommy,” Wilbur said darkly, “I’m only doing this to protect you.”

Tubbo’s heart beat stubbornly, as if refusing the idea that death would come again. Panic was beginning to overwhelm Tubbo. *He didn’t want to die, he didn’t want to die, this was his last life, please he didn’t want to die.*

And then Tubbo remembered he had two lives left.

He still didn’t want to die.

Tubbo kept his eyes on an anguished Tommy, wanting to be able to see his best friend in the last moments before he was plunged into the dark world of respawn.

“Wait.”

Tubbo’s heart froze at the sound of Technoblade’s voice, but he still didn’t dare move a muscle.

“What is it?” Wilbur snapped.

Techno’s voice sounded nonchalant when he next spoke, but Tubbo recognized the guarded quality behind the words. “It’ll have less impact if you do it now. Give Schlatt a rendezvous. Make Schlatt think he can save him, and then kill him right before he succeeds. That’ll hurt him a lot more than killing him now.”

Wilbur took the knife off of Tubbo’s throat. Tubbo let out a breath. Tommy sagged slightly.

“I like how you think,” Wilbur said. Tubbo didn’t have a view of his face, but Tubbo could imagine that terrifying grin. “Get some rope so I can tie him up.”

Soon enough, coarse rope dug uncomfortably into Tubbo’s wrists, and Wilbur had tied a gag around his mouth.

“I don’t want you whispering lies to Tommy,” Wilbur snarled, “but I don’t want you out of my sight, either, so this will have to do.”

After Wilbur was satisfied that Tubbo wasn’t going anywhere, he set Tubbo down in the corner of the bedroom and began checking up on Tommy.

Tommy was shaking, and tears were cascading down his cheeks. Tubbo wanted nothing more than to comfort his friend, but he couldn’t do anything in his present state. He could only watch as Wilbur stroked Tommy’s hair and pulled him into a hug.

“It’s okay,” Wilbur whispered, “Wilbur is going to keep you safe.”

Tommy’s expression was stricken, but it didn’t seem to stop him from melting into the embrace.

Tubbo felt sick.

Chapter End Notes

On the bright side, at least Tommy no longer thinks Tubbo is a traitor.

Thanks for reading! :)

Self-Care Heart Attack

Chapter Summary

Wilbur's glare was blazing.

"I don't need help," he snarled, "You know who does need help? Tommy. My little brother." He smiled, staring past Techno like he was seeing another scene entirely. "He's so small, Techno. He's nothing like that brash boy from before. He woke up from a nightmare and he clung to me."

Chapter Notes

TW: decently descriptive depiction of alcohol withdraw (seizures, nausea, mentions of puking, etc), referenced child abuse, Wilbur's deteriorating mental health

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade had a massive headache. Thanks a lot, Tubbo.

If he was being completely honest, it had probably started with his argument with Wilbur, but Tubbo certainly allowed the headache evolve into something much more aggravating.

Well, in all fairness, the voices were the ones who were creating the headache, but that was completely beside the point.

His argument with Wilbur had started calmly enough. Or, at least, as calmly as it could be when the Chat hadn't stopped screaming about Dream all day.

BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD. KILL THE TELETUBBY. OH MY GOD WE LEFT HIM WITH TOMMY. GO BACK TO TOMMY YOU UTTER FOOL. BLOOD.

In hindsight, Dream was the real cause of Techno's headache.

Deciding that he might as well check one of the Chat's desires off the list, Technoblade gently knocked on Tommy's bedroom door. Personally, he thought the voices were being a tad overprotective. Sure, Dream had hurt Tommy in the past, but he had been fine whenever Dream visited.

YOU CALL THAT FINE???? NOT ONE WORD OUT OF HIM THE ENTIRE TIME!!

Come to think of it, Chat made a good point. Tommy *had* been a little quiet today. Well, actually, more like a *lot* quiet.

Okay, something was definitely wrong, or *more* wrong than usual. Techno cursed himself for not noticing sooner.

“Who is it?”

Tommy’s voice sounded ragged. Techno frowned. Had he been crying?

“It’s just me,” Technoblade said, “Can I come in?”

Technoblade could hear some shuffling and then footsteps, but they stopped abruptly. After a moment of silence, Tommy finally said,

“I’m... I’m not sure if I’m in the mood for talking right now.” Another beat of silence.
“Maybe later, Big T?”

HE NEEDS COMFORT. WE SHOULD GIVE HIM SPACE. LET’S GO KILL DREAM.

Technoblade clenched his fist. Voices aside, his own pressing concern for Tommy made him reluctant to leave him alone. However, if Tommy was explicitly asking for space, it would probably do more harm than good to force him to accept Techno’s company.

HE HATES BEING ALONE. LET’S GO KILL DREAM. Blood, blood, blood, blood, blood

“Alright,” Techno said, “I’m right here if you need me, alright?”

“...Okay.”

Techno sighed and spun around, heading back down the hall. Despite Chat’s innermost desires, Techno had no intentions of seeking out and killing Dream. He *did*, however, want to pick Wilbur’s brain over what was bothering Tommy so much. Maybe there was a part of the story that he was missing.

EXILE. LOGSTEDSHIRE. SO MANY EXPLOSIONS. RACOOONINNIT

As always, Chat was entirely unhelpful. What the heck was a Logstedshire?

IT’S A PLACE, IDIOT.

“Chat, I’ve studied the maps,” Techno said in exhaustion, making his way to the kitchen. Maybe some coffee would shut them up. “I have no memory of a place called Logstedshire.”

IT DOESN’T EXIST YET. AND THEN IT GOES BOOM. LET’S KILL A GREEN JERK.
Blood, blood, blood

Techno had long since decided that the Chat wasn’t worth trying to parse. He tried to ignore the voices as he poured his coffee by focusing on his senses. The sound of coffee pouring into

his cup. The warmth of his mug on his hand in pleasant contrast the cold air of the ravine. The smell of roasted coffee beans. The heavenly, bitter taste of a fresh mug of coffee.

The method mostly worked, but he couldn't completely ignore the complaining his voices were doing in the background.

*Anyone else feeling like Cassandra? **Who?** You know, CASSANDRA, FROM THE MYTHOLOGY. **Oh, her.** Bet Technoteach doesn't remember.*

"Bet," Techno said against his better judgement. What could he say? He wasn't one to back down from a challenge, especially one from the voices in his own head.

"Uh... Cassandra... I know this," Techno mused, cursing his sudden mind-blank.

*HE DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER. **HAHA WHAT A LOSER.** TECHNOFAIL*

"It might be easier for me to think if you guys weren't screaming in my ear," Techno said dryly. He took another sip of his coffee. "Uh... she was cursed..." Suddenly, it clicked. "Oh *right*. She was able to see the future but nobody believed her."

*FINALLY. **SEE THE FUTURE? I CAN DO YOU ONE BETTER.** I feel like we should've discussed this before telling him. EH, IT'S NOT LIKE HE'LL BELIEVE US ANYWAY.*

Techno sighed, wondering when this had become his life. "Chat, I need you to be honest with me, can you or can you not see the future?"

*YES. **NO.** SORT OF??*

"You guys are astonishingly unhelpful, to nobody's surprise." He held his hand up when the voices made offended retorts. "No, you know what? I don't even want to hear it."

He focused back on drinking his now slightly cooler coffee. When he was nearly done, he heard Wilbur's familiar footfalls coming toward the door.

Ah, excellent, he could finally ask Wilbur what was going on with Tommy.

Wilbur slammed the door open, but instead of storming into the room, he walked. He barely looked in Techno's direction as he walked straight toward the coffee pot, pouring himself a large mug of the stuff and almost immediately chugging it down.

CHUG, CHUG, CHUG, CHUG, CHUG

Techno was not deterred by such erratic behavior.

"Hey, Wilbur," he said casually, tuning out his voices' chanting, "I was just going to look for you. Had something I was going to ask."

Wilbur glanced at Techno warily. "What is it?" he snapped.

Techno raised his arms in surrender. "Woah, what's got you so riled up?"

Wilbur let out a shuddering laugh, running his fingers through his curly hair. “Tubbo betrayed us.”

Wait, what?

***HUH?? OF COURSE, HE DID. THIS DEFINITELY DIDN'T HAPPEN LAST TIME??
POWER CORRUPTS.***

“Wait a minute,” Techno said, “You’re saying, *Tubbo*, that kid who would do anything you asked, is a traitor? Isn’t that a little bit, I don’t know, out of character?”

It would definitely explain why Tommy was so despondent, if it weren’t for the fact that it made no sense at all.

Wilbur began pacing. “You don’t understand,” he muttered, “Tubbo’s so easily manipulated, so easily convinced. It was probably all too easy for Schlatt to convince Tubbo that he was the good guy, that *I* was the one that had to be stopped—”

“Yeah,” Techno hastened to interrupt, “but Tommy is his best friend.”

“And Fundy was my son,” Wilbur snapped. He let out another laugh, this one slightly more hysterical. “Family ties mean *nothing* if the knot is too loose.”

Uh oh...CRAZY BOY ABOUT TO GO. WHERE'S PHIL WHERE YOU NEED HIM? WHY WOULD YOU THINK PHIL IS A GOOD IDEA? I mean... we could always kill him right now...

Killing Wilbur was out of the question.

“What do you mean?” Techno asked cautiously.

Wilbur was gripping his hair more tightly now, and Techno resisted the urge to forcibly get Wilbur to let go before he ripped some locks out. Instead, he stood a healthy distance from his steadily deteriorating brother.

“Everyone left me, Technoblade!” Wilbur slammed his hands loudly against the wooden table, causing the entire thing to shake. “The only one left is Tommy! He’s the only one!”

EXCUSE ME? WHAT ARE WE, A POTATO? OH, LET'S JUST USE THE BLADE AND THEN MAKE A NEW GOVERNMENT RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM.

“I’m still here, Wilbur,” Techno protested, unable to stop the hurt that pierced his chest, “If you would just let me help you—”

“You’re helping just fine as you are,” Wilbur said, pointing at Techno in a violent motion, “You’re helping me burn that *damn country* to the ground, and that’s all I need your help for.”

HE'S NOT EVEN TRYING TO HIDE IT ANYMORE. THAT TRAITOR.

There were so many things Techno wanted to say to that, but he stopped himself from losing control. Wilbur clearly wasn't right in the head.

"You clearly aren't okay." Techno took a careful step toward Wilbur. "You need help."

"Don't pretend you can fix me," Wilbur growled. He chuckled, smiling so wide that practically all of his teeth were showing. "You don't get to do that; you don't get to act all high and mighty, because you're the *Blade*; you can do whatever you want; you can get whatever you want, because you're *so perfect*."

Wilbur full out laughed, but it sounded more like a sob. "Phil *loved* you, but not me. No, I was too boring, too untalented, too *defective* for that."

"Phil loves you," Techno interrupted, swallowing down a very rude lump in his throat, "Don't be ridiculous."

"OH YEAH?" Wilbur screamed, "Where is he now then?! Why hasn't he come AT ALL?!"

"Maybe because you won't let anyone—"

"NO! I don't want to hear it! It was always, 'Techno' this, and 'Techno' that!" Wilbur paused, his breathing so heavy it sounded like he had just fought in a battle. He glared at Techno. "So, don't go pretending you can fix me, because I *don't need fixing!*"

I DON'T KNOW, YOU MIGHT. SOUND PRETTY BROKEN TO ME. shut up, you guys, he has daddy issues.

For a moment, Techno was speechless. Had Wilbur really thought that all this time? Because if so... Techno had really screwed up. Phil too.

"You're not broken," Techno agreed, raising his hands up placatingly, "But I do think you need *help*. You know? Stars with an 'h'? ends with a 'p'? Rhymes with yelp?"

God, what was Techno even saying? He was so *bad* at situations like this.

Wilbur's glare was blazing.

"I don't need *help*," he snarled, "You know who does need help? Tommy. My little brother." He smiled, staring past Techno like he was seeing another scene entirely. "He's so *small*, Techno. He's nothing like that brash boy from before. He woke up from a nightmare and he *clung* to me."

Techno was having a hard time keeping up with these mood swings. But Wilbur had a point. Tommy never readily accepted hugs for more than a few seconds, always claiming that he was too much of a 'big man' for them.

Wilbur continued, pacing in circles. "He doesn't understand how dangerous everyone else is. Everyone else wants to kill him, even Tubbo, *especially* Tubbo." He looked back at Techno, grinning wildly. "I will kill every single one of those *monsters* who want to hurt Tommy, and I swear to god, I am going to *enjoy it*."

PROTECT THE RACCOON BOY. AND THIS GUY IS SAFE WITH TOMMY??

For some inexplicable reason, rage surged through Techno, and he didn't try to reel it in. "And you think Tommy's safe with *you*?" Techno snapped, taking a threatening step toward Wilbur, "I've seen what you've done to him."

"I haven't done anything to him," Wilbur snapped, "I was teaching him a lesson, it was for his own good. I was protecting him."

Blood, blood, blood, blood

"You've been *hurting* him, Wilbur!" Techno shouted, "How can you call that protection?! That's wrong!"

"He can't *leave me*, Techno!" Wilbur all but shrieked, "He's the only one I have left! And Dream said—"

DREAM??? LET'S PUNT THAT GREEN MANIAC

"Since when did you listen to what *Dream* said?!" Techno asked sharply.

Wilbur scowled. "I don't." He shoved his hands into his pockets and stalked toward Techno. "I know what you're doing."

"And what is that?" Techno asked dryly. He leaned against the kitchen counter, watching Wilbur warily.

"You're trying to take him away from me," Wilbur said, grinning again, "You're trying to turn him against me, you're going to betray me like everyone else." He laughed. "But it won't work. Tommy's too loyal to me, too dependent on me, so stay the heck away from him."

Techno let out an aggravated sigh and headed toward the door. "I'm not betraying you, Wilbur. I'm still with you. I'm just being honest."

He *was* still with Wilbur. He'd love nothing more than to burn Manberg into nothing but a pile of ash and dust, especially after he's witnessed first-hand what this country has done to both of his brothers.

But as Techno stared down the hallway toward Tommy's bedroom, he was beginning to doubt that Tommy was safe here.

TALK TO THE BOY. HE NEEDS THERAPY. TALK TO THE BOY.

It was rare for the voices to unanimously agree on something like this, especially when Techno was ninety-percent sure there were still some who would love nothing more than to see Tommy burn with fire. Maybe those guys were just being drowned out at the moment.

Techno would love nothing more than to talk to Tommy, but he was pretty awful giving pep-talks, or therapy talks, or stuff like that. It was the price of awkwardness. Not to mention

Tommy had made it pretty clear he didn't want company earlier.

“Chat, I think I need to give him some space.” Techno spun around, ready to farm some potatoes and cool off. “Oh, don't give me—”

Techno stopped. Tubbo was standing right in front of him.

Techno took a couple of steps toward the teen. “Tubbo? What are you—”

Tubbo bolted. Techno caught him.

KILL. MR. PRESIDENT SHOULD ROT IN A HOLE. He isn't president right now. SECRETARY OF STATE IS CLOSE ENOUGH. He hasn't done anything. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD...THERAPY, THERAPY, THERAPY

Technoblade ignored the voices mixed feelings toward Tubbo and listened to his case.

The minute Tubbo brought up rescuing Tommy, half of the voices against Tubbo immediately turned over to his side.

PROTECT THE BOY. I CHANGED MY MIND, TUBBO YOU'RE A LIFE SAVER. ARE WE FORGETTING THAT HE GOT RID OF THE TNT?? WE HAVE WITHERS. Blood, blood, blood...PROTECT, THERAPY, PROTECT, THERAPY

Chat's opinions' aside, Techno let Tubbo go. Tommy's safety was Techno's number one priority at the moment. Destroying Manberg could come later.

Of course, Wilbur just had to go and ruin it, and Techno was forced to stop Wilbur from killing Tubbo then and there.

Wilbur hadn't been lying earlier. He really *did* seem to relish the idea of killing Tubbo just because he might be a danger to Tommy's safety.

The voices wanted nothing more than to kill at least one person in Tommy's bedroom—they were split on whether it be Tommy, Tubbo, or Wilbur, but the majority vote was for Wilbur—so Techno decided that he should leave long enough for them to cool down.

Besides, Wilbur was keeping too watchful of an eye on Tommy and Tubbo for Techno to enact any escape plans right this very second.

He'd work something out.

Schlatt felt like *crap*.

He was very tempted to just give everyone the day off again, but that would probably be irresponsible, so he just sealed off his office.

He could barely think. He could barely walk without needing to puke. His hands couldn't stop shaking. His heart felt like it was trying to beat out of his chest, and sometimes Schlatt thought he was back at that final day, dying of a heart attack all over again.

And he thought yesterday had been bad.

Someone was banging on the door, and Schlatt groaned at the piercing headache he received.

"Schlatt?" Schlatt recognized that voice, who was it again? "Schlatt, I want to talk to you."

Schlatt put his head in his hands. He couldn't even bring himself to be disgusted with how sticky with sweat his entire face was.

He wanted a drink.

"I'm indisposed!" Schlatt shouted, letting out an aggravated moan as his headache fluctuated again.

The door opened, and Schlatt forced himself to sit up. The man... Quackity was walking toward him, wearing an expression Schlatt couldn't read.

"What's going on with you, man?" Quackity stopped in front of Schlatt's desk. He sounded angry, which was fair enough.

"Nothing's going on," Schlatt said, hauling himself to his feet, "I'm just..."

His muscles seized suddenly, and Schlatt let out a cry of pain.

Oh god he was dying again he was dying again...death would feel a whole ton better than this if he was being honest.

"Schlatt?"

Schlatt was on the ground. Had he collapsed?

Quackity was carefully helping Schlatt up. Schlatt could barely focus on his face, but he thought it was something crossed between worried and furious.

"Was that a seizure?" Quackity asked, "Schlatt, what the heck? Are you sick?"

"It's nothing to worry about," Schlatt said, collapsing back into his chair, "I'm perfectly—"

Someone's communicator started ringing, and Schlatt let out yet another cry of pain as his headache spiked.

He really wanted a drink.

"Here, let me," Quackity said, grabbing a communicator off of the desk. It must've belonged to Schlatt, he realized, if it was sitting on his own desk. Quackity stilled. The ringtone still played. "Oh crap."

“Just turn the damn thing off already,” Schlatt moaned through his headache.

“It’s Wilbur.”

Schlatt swore loudly, much to his head’s increased pain. He rubbed his sweaty hands against his pants, before reaching for the phone.

“Let me have it.”

Quackity hesitated. “Schlatt, forget Wilbur, let’s get you to a hospital—”

“No,” Schlatt snapped, “I need to talk to him; it might be important.”

Quackity handed the communicator to Schlatt, and Schlatt fumbled for the answer button. When he finally clicked it, he pressed the communicator against his ear.

“Hello, Schlatt!” Wilbur said cheerfully, which was a bad sign within itself.

Schlatt winced. “What do you want?” he asked irritably, “Because I’m kinda in the middle of this thing—”

“I have Tubbo.”

The world stopped. Schlatt’s stomach churned.

“You what?” Schlatt choked out.

“I have Tubbo,” Wilbur said, “He tried to deliver Tommy to you last night, but I was a step ahead of your protege.”

Schlatt was stumbling out of his seat, hurrying toward the door. His sweaty hands slipped on the doorknob as he fought to open the door.

“What have you done to Tubbo?” Schlatt growled, finally thrusting the door open. Quackity followed.

“Where are you going Schlatt? Wait!” Quackity shouted after him.

Schlatt ignored him, instead focusing on Wilbur’s words. “I haven’t done anything to him yet,” he said, “I mean, I was going to kill him right away—” Schlatt’s heart-rate painfully spiked at that. “—but then I had an even better idea.”

“Wilbur, I *swear* if you have hurt a hair on his head, I will—”

Schlatt wasn’t sure if Wilbur interrupted him or not, because the next thing he knew, he was back on the ground. Fundy was now also hovering over Schlatt, and Quackity was holding the communicator.

“Screw you,” Quackity was snarling, “You’re going to kill a sixteen-year-old? Do you realize how *sick* that is?”

Wilbur said something else over the line, and Quackity's face grew darker. "Of course, we wouldn't—" Another pause. "I don't know, prison?!"

What was going on again? Schlatt couldn't think straight. Wilbur had called, that much Schlatt could remember, and something had happened to Tubbo...

Tubbo.

Schlatt shot up immediately, causing Fundy to jump in surprise. "Schlatt! You're awake! You should probably lie back down."

Schlatt ignored him, trying to scramble up and grab the communicator from Quackity. Quackity danced out of the way and ended the call with another "screw you."

"Okay," Quackity said, focusing back on Schlatt, "We're taking you to the hospital."

"Are you kidding?" Schlatt growled, "Tubbo is literally in the hands of that *maniac*, and you're going to ignore that to put me in the hospital?"

"We're not ignoring it," Fundy said quickly, "You're just really sick right now."

"We'll take care of Tubbo," Quackity promised Schlatt, "But you've had two seizures over the course of the last thirty minutes, which is a pretty bad sign if you ask me."

Schlatt laughed dryly as he leaned against Quackity for support. "You think?"

Schlatt froze when he heard Tubbo's voice behind him. "Hey, Schlatt!"

"Tubbo?" Schlatt whispered. He pushed himself off of Quackity and spun around, searching for the source of the voice. "Tubbo, where are you?"

"Tubbo's not here," Fundy said slowly, looking at Schlatt like he had grown an extra head.

Schlatt scowled. "Of course he is, didn't you just hear him?"

"Oh god, he's hallucinating," Quackity muttered, dragging Schlatt toward the exit, "Screwing withdraw, today of all days. This is the last time I'm letting Tubbo empty the alcohol supply, the *last* time."

Chapter End Notes

Alcohol withdraw is no joke, and that's all I would like to say.

Also, thanks for reading.

Also, let's be glad I finally got to Schlatt's POV again

Also, I hope you have a lovely evening/morning/whatever time it happens to be right now. :)

Cuddles

Chapter Summary

Things were a lot simpler when Tommy was six.

Chapter Notes

TW: child abuse, manipulation, mentioned death, obsessive behavior, being tied up (Tubbo)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

‘Cozy nights’ began back when Tommy was probably around six, maybe even younger.

Back then, Tommy had been deathly afraid of thunderstorms. He hated the way the rain battered against their roof, hated the way the trees looked like they were about to topple over at any minute, hated the sudden flashes of light, hated how the booming thunder seemed to shake the very foundations their house was built on.

At first, Tommy was pretty sure he would just call for Phil. However, he saw how amazing his older brothers were. Wilbur was so incredibly smart, calm, and loving. Technoblade was strong, unyielding, and unafraid.

Tommy wanted to be just like them. And they weren’t afraid of those little thunderstorms.

So, Tommy stopped calling for Phil whenever a thunderstorm hit in the middle of the night. Instead, he buried himself underneath his blankets, holding back whimpers. He was a big boy. Big boys weren’t afraid of thunderstorms.

One night, however, Tommy decided he couldn’t stand it and decided to go downstairs. Maybe he would be less afraid if he wasn’t in the upper floor of the house.

When he reached the bottom of the stairs, however, he saw none other than Wilbur standing in the kitchen and staring at Tommy in shock.

“Tommy?” Wilbur had whispered, “Why are you awake?”

Tommy clenched his fists, hating that he didn’t have an impressive answer. What was he supposed to say? He was afraid of the storm? That he was like a baby who jumped at the sight of lightning flashing across the sky?

Tommy didn't want to say any of those things, especially not to Wilbur, who's opinion he valued immensely.

Instead, Tommy deflected, "Why are *you* awake?"

Wilbur shrugged. "I woke up," he said.

Tommy found this answer very unhelpful and was going to tell Wilbur that too, but light flashed through the windows and thunder boomed. Tommy flinched and yelped before he could stop himself.

Wilbur was staring at him more seriously now, and Tommy felt his face get hot in embarrassment.

"What are you looking at?" Tommy demanded.

Wilbur looked away immediately, opening up the kitchen cabinet. "I thought I might get myself some hot chocolate." He took a red mug out of the cabinet. "Would you like some?"

Tommy winced as distant thunder reached his ears.

"Yeah, I guess," Tommy said, trying not to sound too eager.

Wilbur made them both cups of hot chocolate, and they both curled up on the couch, mugs in hand. Tommy basked in the warmth and rich sweetness of the drink. Wilbur was the best at making hot chocolate.

"So, you're still afraid of thunderstorms?" Wilbur asked quietly, wrapping his arm around Tommy's shoulders.

Tommy scowled into his hot chocolate, blaming the burning sensation in his eyes from the steam coming from his mug.

"I'm not afraid," Tommy said stubbornly.

"I'm afraid," Wilbur whispered, his voice almost being lost amidst the battering rain.

Tommy looked up at Wilbur in shock. "But you're not afraid of anything!" he exclaimed. Wilbur made a shushing noise, and Tommy quieted down. "You're so brave, though."

Wilbur laughed. "Your mum once said that you can't be brave without being afraid."

Another surprise. Wilbur never talked about Tommy's mother. As a matter of fact, Tommy's mother was almost never mentioned by anyone. Tommy had never questioned it before.

But now, Tommy suddenly found himself wanting to know more.

"Was she nice?" Tommy already knew the answer. There was no way his daddy would've married a bad person, but he wanted to hear it from Wilbur.

Wilbur reached across Tommy and put his already empty mug down on the end table and wrapped Tommy up in his arms, being careful not to jostle the hot chocolate Tommy was holding.

Tommy put his half-full mug on the end table next to Wilbur's mug and rested his head on Wilbur's chest. The sound of his heartbeat was calming compared to the rage outside.

"She was *very* nice," Wilbur whispered, "She was the one who found me, you know, after my parents..." Wilbur's words sounded choked off, but Tommy needed to know more.

"After what?"

Wilbur buried his face into Tommy's hair. "After they left me," he whispered, "That's what I'm afraid of. People leaving."

"Oh."

Tommy didn't know what to make of that. It just seemed so unlike Wilbur to be afraid of anything. He supposed it made a little bit of sense. Tommy didn't know what he would do if his daddy, Techno, and Wilbur were to leave him.

He never knew his mum, so he didn't know what it was like to lose her.

And suddenly, something clogged Tommy's throat, and his eyes became wet. Thunder shook the house again, and his frightened whimper came out as a broken sob.

Wilbur held Tommy closer, and Tommy wrapped his own arms around Wilbur, clutching onto his brother's shirt.

"Oh, Toms," he whispered, "What's wrong?"

"Do you hate me?" Tommy sobbed, "I took Mummy away. She left because of me!"

Wilbur began rubbing circles into Tommy's back, and the relaxing gesture only made Tommy cry all the more. It felt like he was drowning in his salty tears, like he couldn't breathe at all, and he was getting Wilbur's shirt wet, but he couldn't stop, because he hurt Wilbur and now —

"I could never hate you, Tommy," Wilbur said softly, making calming shushing noises, "And you didn't take Kristin away."

"But I killed her," Tommy whimpered into Wilbur's very wet shirt, "If I didn't—"

"You didn't kill her," Wilbur whispered, rocking Tommy gently back and forth, "Her body just couldn't handle things the way it was supposed to."

"But it wouldn't have to handle things if it weren't for me." Tommy sniffed loudly. "Everyone would be happier if I wasn't born."

This wasn't the first time Tommy thought things like this, but it was the first time he talked about it.

"No, no." Wilbur's voice sounded choked. "You make us *so* happy."

"But—"

Wilbur gently pulled back. "Look at me." Tommy looked up at Wilbur's face, and was surprised to see a shaky smile on his brother's face even a tear rolled down his cheek. "You know what your mum told me when you were born?"

Tommy shook his head, not daring to utter a word.

"She said, she said—" Wilbur's smile wobbled as more tears spilled down his face before his expression melted into something suddenly soft. "She said, *Isn't he beautiful?*"

Wilbur's voice was so filled with emotion, so filled with *love*, that Tommy couldn't do anything but stare.

Wilbur pulled him back into a hug, clutching Tommy to his chest. "She loved you *so much*," Wilbur whispered, "And you make all of us *so, so* happy."

"Really?" Tommy whispered, his voice muffled against Wilbur's shirt, "But you said you were afraid of people leaving, and Mummy left, and I was the one that made her go. Shouldn't I make you sad?"

"You're my baby brother," Wilbur said, like it was the most obvious thing in the world, "and, besides, I'm afraid of you leaving me too."

A flash of light filled the room, and Tommy let out a muffled shriek when the sound of thunder slammed against his ears. So caught up in the conversation, Tommy had almost forgotten about the storm outside.

"It's okay," Wilbur whispered soothingly, carding his fingers through Tommy's hair, "You're safe."

Tommy decided that maybe Wilbur could understand his fear. It was only fair, considering everything Wilbur had just told him.

"Creepers."

"What?" Wilbur breathed out, sounding surprised.

Tommy swallowed; he had never told anyone this before, not even Daddy. "The thunder sounds like creepers."

"Tommy." Wilbur sounded horror-stricken, and Tommy wondered if this was a bad idea. "When, *how* do you know what a creeper sounds like?"

“I—” Tommy’s voice trembled, but now that he started he was afraid to stop. “I was playing outside, and there was one standing right there, and so I ran away, but it still blew up, and it was *so loud*, and I thought I was going to die, and it was so scary!”

Wilbur’s voice shook when he next spoke. “You mean... that creeper hole Dad found near the backdoor a year ago... that wasn’t a random occurrence? And that’s why you suddenly got afraid of thunderstorms?”

Tommy nodded.

“Oh, *Tommy*.” Wilbur sounded anguished. “Were you hurt?”

“No,” Tommy whimpered, “I was too fast... too fast for any stupid... dumb creeper to get *me*.”

Well, in reality, Tommy had been pushed back by the blast, fortunately not sustaining any burns, but he had gotten pretty scraped up. He told Phil that he tripped.

Tommy didn’t realize he had anymore tears left in him, but apparently his body had secret warehouses full of them, because suddenly he was crying into Wilbur’s shirt all over again.

“I’m getting your shirt wet,” Tommy whimpered.

Wilbur let out a watery laugh. “Well, I’m getting *your* hair wet, so there.”

Tommy wasn’t sure how long they cried, but by the time they were done, the storm had finally started to die down, and Tommy was feeling quite sleepy.

“Don’t worry,” Wilbur whispered, “I’ll protect you.”

“I promise not to leave,” Tommy said as he fell asleep in Wilbur’s arms.

After that, it became a tradition of sorts for Wilbur and Tommy to cuddle on the couch with hot chocolate in hand whenever they couldn’t sleep. Wilbur called them ‘cozy nights,’ and Tommy thought the name was quite on the nose.

The tradition slowed as Tommy got older, but even during the first war for L’manberg, Tommy and Wilbur would curl up next to each other, saying nothing, trying to forget the death and destruction.

Now, Tommy was curled up next to Wilbur, still marveling over the warmth of his body, of the heart beating in his chest, of how *alive* Wilbur was compared to Ghostbur.

Tommy was clutching a mug of hot chocolate with Wilbur’s arms wrapped around him, and if it weren’t for the mustiness of the ravine, Tommy could almost pretend that everything was perfectly fine and normal.

But it was hard to pretend when his best friend was tied up in the corner of the room, looking terrified for his life.

“Wilbur,” Tommy whispered, his voice cracking from all the crying he had done before.

Wilbur hummed, resting his head against Tommy’s. “Yes, Toms?”

“Please let Tubbo go,” he whispered in a rush, “Please, I promise I won’t leave you, I promise, I promise, but please don’t hurt Tubbo. Please let him go.”

Wilbur’s embrace tightened. Instead of the comforting sensation Tommy used to have, he felt restrained, like Wilbur was holding onto him with no intentions of letting go.

“You know I can’t do that, Tommy,” Wilbur said, a warning in his voice, “He’ll hurt you.”

Fear thrummed through every part of Tommy’s veins, his instincts pleading with him to *stop talking, leave it alone, keep Wilbur happy, Dream doesn’t like it when you argue back, just shut up, shut up, shut up.*

But he made eye contact with Tubbo, who was shaking his head ever so slightly. Tommy didn’t know exactly what he was shaking his head at, but he could recognize the *unadulterated fear* in his best friend’s eyes.

Tommy was never good at leaving things well enough alone anyway.

“He can’t hurt me if I don’t go with him,” Tommy pleaded, “I’ll stay with you, I’ll never leave, I promise, but Tubbo doesn’t have anything to do with this. Tubbo hasn’t hurt me yet, he won’t ever hurt me. Just let him go.”

Tubbo was shaking his head even more furiously now, and Tommy wondered if he had finally lost it. Didn’t he *want* to live another day?

Wilbur was squeezing so tightly it hurt. Tommy bit back a whimper. *Dream didn’t like it when he whined.*

“You know I can’t,” Wilbur said, his voice becoming sterner, “What have I told you time and time again?”

Tommy wouldn’t, *couldn’t*, repeat it. He didn’t want to lose himself again, didn’t want to believe he was truly alone in the world.

“Wilbur—” he tried.

“*Tommy.*” Wilbur’s voice was harsh, and Tommy felt every part of his body freeze.

“You’re the only one I can trust.” The words came out automatically, as if Tommy’s brain had triggered a defense mechanism to keep Wilbur happy.

Wilbur let out a satisfied hum, carding his fingers through Tommy’s hair. “There’s my good boy.”

Tubbo's face seemed to switch from horror to anger at the words. Tommy felt humiliated. He couldn't believe that Tubbo had to see him like this. So weak and pathetic, so useless.

He'll never want anything to do with you now, a voice in the back of his head that sounded a lot like Dream's said, *You're a useless, immature, selfish child, who can't do anything for anyone.*

Tommy almost buried his face into Wilbur's chest so that he could pretend that Tubbo wasn't there, watching all of this. He thought better of it, though. While he was sure Wilbur would love nothing more than to have Tommy crying into him like he was six again, Tommy was *not*, in fact, six-years-old, and refused to humiliate himself any further.

Ghostbur wouldn't treat him like this. Ghostbur wouldn't squeeze so tightly that it hurt, wouldn't threaten the life of his best friend. If Ghostbur were here right now, he would be passing around blue, making sure everyone was alright, trying to diffuse the situation.

Wait...did Tommy seriously *miss* Ghostbur? Was Tommy really so ungrateful that he wished his brother were dead again?

Selfish, selfish, selfish

It didn't matter right now. Tommy reminded himself firmly that if he didn't do something soon, Tubbo would be dead. And who was Tommy without Tubbo?

Tommy took a deep breath, gathering all of his remaining courage, and said in the boldest voice he could muster, "Wilbur, if you don't let Tubbo go, I swear to god, I *will* leave, and I won't look back."

It was a bluff. It was such a bluff. Tommy didn't dream of leaving Wilbur in this mental state; the mere idea was criminal. Because as much as Tommy hated being here, as much as he hated the way Wilbur was treating him, Tommy knew that Wilbur needed *help*, and Tommy needed to be the one to give it to him.

He just hoped that his bluff would be enough for Wilbur to let Tubbo go.

The silence was deafening, and Tommy felt dread form in his stomach. Whenever Dream was upset, he would be silent, tilting his head slightly with his lips in a thin line. He would be silent for just long enough to know that Tommy had *screwed up*, and then the lies, the harsh words, the punishment began.

For a horrible moment, Tommy had no idea where he was, and it was terrifying, because Wilbur and Dream dealt punishment in two incredibly different and incredibly similar ways.

And then two hands grabbed him by the shoulders and pushed Tommy back. "Look at me."

Tommy looked up at Wilbur.

It was impossible to describe the expression on his brother's face. It was soft, but hard. It was terrified, but calm. It was as if Wilbur couldn't decide how he was supposed to feel, and a war of emotions was battling in his brother's mind.

Tommy willed himself not to tremble and failed horribly.

“Where would you go?” Wilbur asked, his words biting.

Tommy couldn’t breathe.

“I could just leave,” Tommy said to Dream one day, feeling particularly stubborn.

Dream laughed. “Where would you go? Nobody wants you.”

Tommy’s ears started ringing, but that didn’t stop him from hearing every word Wilbur said.

“Would you go to *Manberg*?” Wilbur asked, “They would kill you on sight. Would you go to Eret? He’s a traitor.”

Tommy forced himself to take in another gulp of air, even though every breath burned like ash in his lungs.

“Besides—” Wilbur’s face became suddenly dark as he tightly squeezed Tommy’s shoulders. “—if you leave, what’s going to stop Dream from finding you?”

Tommy froze.

Wilbur was right. Wilbur was right, and he hated it. Heck, Tommy hadn’t even *planned* on actually leaving, and he was still stricken by how well Wilbur had cornered him. What if he actually had wanted to leave? How much worse would he be feeling right now?

Because Wilbur was right. If Tommy left, he would be an easy target for Dream. There would be literally nobody stopping him from taking Tommy back to that hell.

And then Tommy remembered that this time’s Dream wasn’t actually the same Dream who exiled and manipulated him. Maybe this Dream wouldn’t want to do that again.

Oh, who was he kidding? Dream was a terrible person, no matter what timeline Tommy happened to be in.

Wilbur smiled triumphantly. “You’re finally starting to understand,” he said, “I’m the only one in this world who will protect you.”

Tommy was suddenly reminded of that promise from a decade ago. Back before they had been tainted by these stupid wars. Back before Dream had ruined everything for everyone.

Tommy stopped arguing with Wilbur after that. It was clear that nothing he would say would convince Wilbur to let Tubbo go.

Tommy fell asleep in his brother’s arms.

Me getting carried away strikes again. I did not intend for the flashback to be that long, but it is, sue me.

Techno, while all this is happening: Alright, time to rescue some boys

Thanks for everyone's support so far! :)

Stop Chugging the Coffee

Chapter Summary

Rescue mission officially a go.

Chapter Notes

TW: panic attacks, child abuse, emotional manipulation, drugging, nightmares

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade had been hoping to sneak the kids out of Pogtopia that night, but Wilbur had managed to get Tommy to fall asleep on top of him, much to the chat's chagrin.

*Possessive creep. **Let's slit his throat.** I want to puke. TOMMY LOOKS SO MISERABLE. I don't know... he seems kind of comfortable? **I don't understand how he can look simultaneously so comfortable and so miserable at the same time. LET'S SLIT HIS THROAT.***

The chat wasn't exactly wrong. Tommy looked as though he had cried for hours, and even his breathing sounded more like shuddering sobs. At the same time, though, Tommy was clutching onto Wilbur's jacket nestling himself deeper into his brother's arms.

Wilbur had his arms wrapped around Tommy in a way that might seem endearing at first glance, but upon closer inspection, seemed more possessive than anything else. Wilbur was clutching onto Tommy the same way a little kid might clutch onto a toy he didn't want to share.

Tubbo was also asleep in the corner of the room, looking like he was faring no better than Tommy. Possibly worse, considering that the kid was gagged, tied up, and on the cold stone floor.

Techno turned around and left the room with a quiet sigh. There was no way he was going to be able to extract Tommy without waking Wilbur, and Technoblade seriously doubted that Tubbo was going to be willing to leave without Tommy, not that he could blame him.

LET'S SLIT HIS THROAT. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD. Ghostbur would even call us a public hero if we did that. I mean, he didn't exactly blow up L'manberg yet, so... I MISS GHOSTBUR. Really? I thought he was pathetic. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

“For the last time,” Techno muttered as he walked quickly to his potato farm, “What are you guys talking about?”

Ghostbur, obviously. You know, the one with that sheep he named Friend? HAIL FRIEND. UGH, friend. SHUT UP FRIEND WAS THE BEST SHEEP ANYONE COULD EVER ASK FOR. Guys, he doesn't know about Friend, remember?

Techno reached for a hoe, ready to stress farm more potatoes. “Yeah, I think you should be more concerned about the fact that I don't know this Ghostbur you're talking about. And please don't tell me it's a mix between ‘Ghost’ and ‘Wilbur’ because I've already told you I'm not killing him.”

WHY NOT. IT WOULDN'T EVEN BE HARD. JUST KILL HIM, GET TOMMY OUT, AND SPAWN A COUPLE OF WITHERS IN L'MANBERG. It's Manberg, now. OH, SAME DIFFERENCE.

Techno tuned out the Chat's arguing as he started harvesting potatoes. The soft dirt underneath his fingers grounded him, reminded him that there was more to feel and do than just merciless killing.

He went on like that for a while, just harvesting and planting more potatoes. One potato, however, he grimaced at.

“Poisoned,” he muttered, sticking it in his inventory anyway. You never knew when poison could be handy.

LET'S POISON HIM. YEAH. POISON, POISON, POISON

Actually...

“You know, Chat?” Techno said, “That's not actually a half bad idea.”

HE LISTENS. I never thought I'd see the day. EVERYONE THIS CALLS FOR CELEBRATION. I'LL BRING THE KINFE.

“Now, hold on.” Techno raised his arms placatingly. “I still haven't agreed to any murder.”

OH, COME ON. FLIPS TABLE OVER IN RAGE.

Techno sighed. “Listen, okay? I'll spike his coffee or something. Then I can tell him he got sick and Quackity or someone took the kids while I was distracted.”

SERIOUSLY? Techno, you can't lie to save your life. The fact you managed to 'successfully' hide Tommy from Dream is a miracle.

“Wait a minute,” Techno said, “When did I hide Tommy from Dream? And don't tell me that future stuff again.”

FUTURE. FUTURE. FUTURE. WHY WON'T YOU LISTEN TO US DAMNIT. THEY SAY THERE WAS A SPECIAL PLACE, WHERE MAN BELIEVED HIS VOICES CAME FROM

THE FUTURE.

“Okay, don’t try improvising song lyrics,” Techno said dryly, heading to the kitchen, “You are clearly terrible at holding a tune.”

*MY FUTURE. **OUR FUTURE.** MY FUTURE. **OUR FUTUUUUURE.***

“You guys sound like a bunch of orphans trying to sing happy birthday,” Techno grumbled, massaging his temple.

*HEY! **OUR SINGING IS BEAUTIFUL.***

He entered the kitchen, ignoring the voices antics. He checked the clock on the wall. The sun should be rising about now.

“Alright,” Techno said, “Time to drug my brother’s breakfast.”

An hour later, a sudden scream echoed across the ravine.

Without thinking too hard about it, Techno scrambled out of the kitchen, completely ignoring the eggs he had on the stove.

*TOMMY. **I forgot he did this.** WILBUR IS NOT GOING TO HELP AT ALL.*

No screams followed the initial cry, but somehow Techno didn’t find himself comforted. His suspicions were proven correct as he headed shuddering sobs from the other room.

“Tommy, breathe.” Wilbur voice sounded mildly hysterical. Techno burst through the door loudly.

Tommy was on the ground, curled in on himself, staring off into the distance. His chest was rising up and down at an inhuman rate, and his shuddering sobs were sounding more like a drowning man’s final breaths.

Wilbur was holding Tommy firmly by the shoulders, shaking him slightly.

Tubbo, who was originally in the corner of the room, was crawling forward like an inchworm, wearing a determined scowl and letting out incomprehensible shouts in Wilbur’s direction through this gag. Techno could barely hear him at all over Tommy’s breathing.

Speaking of whom, Tommy’s face was getting paler, and he was looking closer and closer to fainting,

“Breathe damnit!” Wilbur shouted, his hysteria being replaced by anger, “Look at me in the eyes and breathe!”

*POISON. **KNIFE.** Blood, blood, blood, blood, blood*

Tommy froze, not breathing at all. Techno's heart stopped, and Tubbo's muffled shouting died out immediately.

Techno watched, his horror mounting, as Tommy obediently looked Wilbur in the eyes, his shoulders hunched in submission.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to, I promise I didn't mean to —"

Tommy dissolved into incoherent babbling, and Techno's dread created a pit in his stomach. And his voices suddenly spoke in unison, unleashing their dangerous fury.

DREAM.

It took everything Techno had not to see red in that moment, not to pull out his sword and kill everyone in the room. Because his voices screamed, *bellowed*, in rage, demanding blood, demanding that Wilbur be beaten into the ground, demanding that Techno seek out Dream and make sure he never saw the light of day again.

Wilbur's voice, ironically enough, snapped him out of it.

"*Shut up!* Just, SHUT UP!" Wilbur's voice was an unearthly shriek.

Techno understood that overwhelming need to get Tommy to *stop* babbling, to *stop* begging, to *stop* reminding him that he had failed somewhere, except he didn't even know *where*.

That didn't mean he thought screaming at the already panicking teen was the best method to do so.

Tommy stopped babbling. Tommy stopped doing anything. He just stared straight ahead, past Wilbur, past Techno, as if he were somewhere else entirely.

Wilbur *finally* loosened his grip on Tommy's shoulders and pulled him into a hug. Tommy blinked, looking more alert than before. A few seconds later, he burst into tears.

"Shh, shh," Wilbur whispered, "You're alright. Wilbur's here. You're alright."

Techno became vaguely aware that the voices were screaming, that they had been screaming for a while. He barely heard them. The horror of what he was witnessing was just too much for him to wrap his mind around. He wanted to move; he wanted to take Tommy away from Wilbur and leave, but his legs wouldn't move.

He could only watch.

Tommy clutched onto Wilbur's jacket, sobbing heavily. Wilbur rocked him back and forth, whispering comforts. Comforts that only made Techno feel sicker by the second.

Finally, *finally*, Tommy pulled himself together enough for Wilbur to let go of him, and Techno suddenly became more aware of his senses.

Namely, his sense of smell. Was that... smoke?

KILL HIM. THE EGGS. HUG THE CHILD. THE EGGS.

Oh *crap*, the eggs.

At first, Techno wanted to stay here. He hated the idea of leaving Tommy with Wilbur and his twisted affection.

Then he realized that Wilbur wasn't going to let him do anything, and a fire was really the last thing they needed. Especially when they were underground and smoke could get trapped *very* easily.

THE EGGS. WHAT ARE YOU DOING; WHY ARE YOU LEAVING HIM!

Techno dashed out of the room and burst back into the kitchen. He was met with the sound of obnoxious sizzling and a rancid smell coming from the plume of smoke emerging from the stove.

THIS STOVE IS ON FIRE! WE DIDN'T START THE FIRE, IT WAS ALWAYS BURNING SINCE TECHNO BEEN LEAVING. Maybe take the eggs off the stove next time.

Techno held his sleeve up to his face to breathe better. Walking toward the smoke, he reached into the cabinets and found their supply of salt and baking soda. He then proceeded to toss it at the fire, watching the flames go down.

Good bye, fire. You were beautiful. We will miss you. Press F for respects. F, F, f, f, fffffff

"Chat, five seconds ago you were screaming at me to put it out."

Five seconds ago, is a long time. People change. HEARTS change. WAIT A MINUTE, WEREN'T WE GOING TO USE THE EGGS TO DRUG WILBUR?? OH NO YOU'RE RIGHT. AAAAAAAH

Techno sighed and grabbed the searing pan. Due to being a piglin hybrid, he burned a lot less easily and didn't need an oven mitt. Instead, he quickly dumped the charred eggs into the trashcan.

"Calm yourselves," Techno said, "The coffee has survived."

Techno immediately pulled a potion of sleeping out of his inventory and poured it into the coffee pot.

"Hopefully the bitterness of the coffee will overpower the taste," Techno muttered, "He drinks it black."

LIKE HIS HEART AND SOUL.

Techno only sighed and put the empty bottle back into his inventory.

It turned out that Wilbur was a very occupied man. Which was good, Techno supposed, since it gave him more time to air the remaining smoke out of the kitchen, but he was getting impatient for Wilbur to drink his damn coffee already.

But *no*, first he had to *make a call*.

Techno was there, mostly because he didn't want to leave Tommy and Tubbo *alone* with Wilbur, even though he wasn't sure if he was actually being any help. Tubbo was still curled up on the ground, and Tommy was still curled in on himself, looking afraid of everything that moved.

Wilbur was right. He *did* look small.

The call started innocently enough. At least, as innocently as it could with Wilbur on the phone.

Wilbur started out sitting next to Tommy on the couch, keeping an arm around Tommy's shoulders. The phone rang for maybe about a minute, and just as Techno thought Schlatt wasn't going to bother to answer, he did.

Wilbur's face brightened like it was his birthday.

"Hello, Schlatt!" he said cheerfully. Both Tommy and Tubbo winced.

Either Wilbur had his volume on loud enough or Techno's enhanced hearing was enough to pick it up, because Techno could hear Schlatt's end clear as day.

"What do you want?" Schlatt's voice sounded annoyed, but there was a fogged quality to it. Was he sick? "Because I'm kinda in the middle of something—"

SCHLATT. GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL. DIED OF A HEART ATTACK. WILL TECHNO BELIEVE US? OF COURSE NOT.

Wilbur grinned at the wall widely. "I have Tubbo. "

Silence. Then,

"You *what?* "

Wilbur got to his feet; Techno wasn't sure why. Maybe he just got too overexcited. "I have Tubbo," he repeated, "He tried to deliver Tommy to you last night, but I was a step ahead of your protégé."

"What have you done to Tubbo?" Schlatt didn't demand; he *sarled* like a wolf who's master had been injured.

SCHLATT CARES? WHATT? WHY IS HE EVEN BOTHERING? DOESN'T HE WANT TUBBO DEAD? AREN'T THEY MAKING A FESTIVAL PURELY TO KILL TUBBO??

It was nice seeing the Chat confused for a change. Well, in all fairness, Techno was definitely *more* confused than his voices, but his point still stood.

Wilbur threatened Tubbo's life, and then Schlatt said something weirdly protective, and then there was the sound of *crashing*? And then Quackity had the phone and began yelling at Wilbur, who got more and more aggravated the more Quackity told him the *truth* of the situation.

Techno vaguely noted that Tubbo was crying. Tommy was staring at Tubbo, but he didn't move from his spot on the couch.

WHAT IS GOING ON?? WHY IS SCHLATT PROTECTIVE? DADSCHLATT POG? ARE YOU KIDDING ME RIGHT NOW? HE'S PART OF A TYRANNIC SYSTEM. SCRATCH THAT, HE'S THE TYRANT.

In the midst of the voices confused shouting, the call must've ended, because Wilbur was shoving his communicator into his pocket, smiling slightly.

"Well, that definitely got to them," he said, "And I'll not be surprised if they try to stage a rescue."

Techno raised an eyebrow. "And that's good how?"

Wilbur raised both of his eyebrows. "Well, then we can kill Tubbo right in front of him," he said like it was obvious.

NOOOoooo. I'LL BRING THE KNIFE. OH, LET THE FUTURE PRESIDENT DIE IT WILL DO US ALL FAVORS. SHUT UP NOBODY ASKED YOU.

Wilbur, obviously unaware of the Chat's inner turmoil, walked over to Tubbo and heaved the kid over his shoulder. Tubbo began squirming violently, making loud noises through his gag and clearly trying his best to kick Wilbur, but Wilbur held a tight grip on him. To Tubbo's credit, he did not let up on the kicking part.

KICK HARDER. HE KICKS LIKE A GIRL. HAVE YOU SEEN NIKI KICK A MAN WHEN SHE'S DETERMINED?? Wasn't that us? Oooh yeah, that hurt. KICK LIKE NIKI WHEN SHE'S DETERMINED.

Ignoring the struggling teen, Wilbur then went over to Tommy, holding out his free hand.

"Come on, Toms," Wilbur said, "It's breakfast time."

Tommy was still staring at Tubbo as he allowed Wilbur to help him up and walk him to the kitchen.

Almost there, Techno reminded himself as he walked toward the kitchen, *almost there*.

When they entered the kitchen, Tommy sniffed and stiffened. Why—oh, it was probably the smoke smell. It must not have aired all the way out.

“What happened in here?” Tommy grumbled.

Techno elected to ignore the wavering in Tommy’s voice. “Breakfast gone wrong.”

Wilbur laughed as he dumped Tubbo in the corner of the room. Tubbo let out a muffled cry when he hit the ground with a painful-sounding thump. Tommy flinched.

“That sounds like you,” Wilbur said, going to the counter and grabbing the coffee pot. As Wilbur began pouring, Techno kept his eyes glued on the progression of the dark brown liquid filling his mug.

Wilbur gave Techno a suspicious glance. “What are you looking at?”

HE KNOWS. QUICK, PLAY DUMB.

“Looking at? I’m not looking at anything,” Techno said, “I was just... ah, lost in thought. Yeah, lost in thought, that’s right.”

Wilbur narrowed his eyes at Techno. “What were you thinking about?”

“Nothing,” Techno said quickly. Too quickly.

OH NO, WE’RE DEAD.

Wilbur glared at Techno.

“You’d better not be thinking of betraying me, Technoblade,” Wilbur snarled, pointing a threatening finger at him.

“Betray you?” Techno asked, “Why would I betray you? I hate government, remember?”

Wilbur picked up his mug from the counter, and for a horrifying moment, Techno was afraid he was going to dump it all out.

Instead, Wilbur chugged the entire thing.

Chugged it.

The entire thing.

The entire mug of spiked coffee.

OH MY NOTCH, HE DID IT. I CAN’T BELIEVE IT. WHO CHUGS THEIR COFFEE? THIS GUY, APPARENTLY. CHUG, CHUG, CHUG, CHUG

Already, Techno felt the tension drain out of his body, even as Wilbur violently slammed the mug down with a grimace.

“What was in that coffee?” he muttered, “I feel so—” Rage flashed across his face, and he took an unsteady step toward Techno. His words slurred together when he next spoke.

“Techno, you damn—”

Wilbur collapsed onto the floor. Tommy let out a startled cry.

“Wilbur!”

Tommy rushed over to Wilbur, probably to check that he’s not dead. Techno went straight to Tubbo, who tried to shuffle backward, fear evident in his eyes.

YOU SHOULD FEAR US. CAN’T EVEN KIDNAP A MAN PROPERLY. CAN’T EVEN EXECUTE A MAN PROPERLY. Guys, that’s a good thing.

Techno crouched down and immediately untied the gag around Tubbo’s face as carefully as he could. Tubbo still winced as the gag came off of his face, and Techno winced when he saw the ugly red imprints that the gag had made, like an exaggerated smiley face.

Techno immediately started untying the knots of the ropes restraining Tubbo.

“Oh my god,” Tubbo whispered, his voice cracking from disuse, “Oh my god.”

Almost instantly after Tubbo spoke, Tommy was on his feet, running away from Wilbur’s unconscious form and toward Tubbo.

“Tubbo!” he cried out.

Tommy stopped about a foot away from Tubbo, just as Techno pulled the last of the ropes off of him. Tommy gave Tubbo a wobbly smile, and Techno already saw tears pricking the corner of his eyes.

Techno helped Tubbo to his feet.

“Hey, Tommy,” Tubbo said, relief bleeding into his voice. Techno vaguely felt like he was watching two long-lost brothers reunite.

Tommy opened his mouth, looking ready to say something, but he shut it again, staring at the floor.

“I’m sorry,” he whispered, “I’m sorry you had to see that, or experience that, I’m sorry—”

“Tommy,” Tubbo cut in softly.

Tommy continued rambling, not looking up from the ground. “But you and Techno can get out of here now, and it’ll be fine, and I’ll help Wilbur, you don’t have to worry about me—”

PARDON? YEAH RIGHT. NOT EVEN I WOULD WISH SUCH A FATE UPON RACCOON BOI. SET HIM STRAIGHT. BUT NICELY, THE BOY HAS ENOUGH TRAUMA AS IT IS.

Techno held up a hand.

“Hold it,” he said. Tommy flinched and shut his mouth firmly, not looking up from the ground. “You’re *not* staying here, Tommy. You’re leaving with Tubbo.”

Tommy's head snapped up toward Techno, his face full of horror. "No," he whispered, taking a step back, "no, Techno, if you stay, he'll *kill* you. He knows what you did, and you can't lie to save your life."

I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM TRY. Finally, an excuse to bring the knife.

Techno opened his mouth to speak, but Tubbo beat him to it.

"You can't stay here," Tubbo said, taking a small step toward Tommy, "Don't you see what he's doing?"

Tommy flinched, glancing down at Wilbur sprawled on the ground. "Of course I see what he's doing," he said coldly, "But I can't leave."

Tubbo let out a pained noise and ran his fingers through his hair. "Why not?" he asked, his voice becoming firmer, "He's *abusing* you, Tommy, you can't just—"

"You don't understand," Tommy said, glaring at Tubbo, "It's not like that."

"What's not like that?" Techno interjected.

Tommy let out a frustrated groan taking a couple more steps back. "He's not like, he's not like... he's not doing this on purpose. Well, he is, but I mean, he actually *cares*."

SO?? YEAH, LIKE A POSSESSIVE CREEP. RED FLAGS, BIG RED FLAGS. NOT LIKE WHO??

"So?" Tubbo demanded, "That doesn't give him the right to hurt you."

Tommy crossed his arms. "It makes me feel better about the situation, especially considering that I am *not* leaving."

It was Tubbo's turn to scowl. "Well, I'm not leaving without you, so—"

Tommy scoffed. "You'll die if you stay here."

Tubbo crossed his arms resolutely. "And so will you."

The silence felt like pouring rain, and for a moment, even the Chat was silent.

Tommy let out a short laugh. "Don't be ridiculous, Tubbo, Wilbur would never hurt me. Permanently, at least."

PERMANENTLY? YOU CAN'T BECOME COMPLACENT TO ABUSE. ARE YOU SURE WE CAN'T KILL HIM??

"He *is* hurting you, though," Tubbo said softly, "And I don't mean physically. You're miserable, Tommy, you look like you're expecting a hit from everyone, you shy away from everything you see. If you stay here, I wouldn't be surprised if I never saw you again."

Tommy uncrossed his arms and took a huge step back, his mouth slightly agape. Then, he scowled and closed it shut again.

“I can’t leave,” Tommy said firmly.

“Why not?” Techno asked, “Why can’t you leave?”

Tommy looked pleadingly at Tubbo and Techno. “He’s ill,” he practically begged, “He needs *help*, not a sword through his gut.”

Techno felt like someone had dumped a bucket of ice on top of him. The voices were screaming, but Techno ignored them.

“Tommy... nobody said anything about killing Wilbur,” Techno said slowly, “Why, why would you think we would do that?”

Painfully obvious fear flashed across Tommy’s face, but it was replaced by that stubborn scowl. “Forget I said anything.”

“Tommy.” Tubbo’s voice was different now. It sounded far more pained, far more haunted. “Nobody’s going to kill Wilbur, especially not Phil.”

Techno’s heart skipped a beat. Why would they bring Phil into this?

The Chat was going absolutely ballistic about now, but they were nothing more than white noise to Techno, he couldn’t pay any attention to them.

Tommy looked about as shocked as Techno felt, because he stumbled back a few steps, causing his back to hit the wall.

“If-if I were to be made president by Wilbur,” Tommy stuttered, “What, what would I do?”

Tubbo smiled, but Techno was pretty sure the kid was about to burst into tears. “You would give it up,” he whispered, letting out a choked sob, “And then Wilbur would hand the presidency over to me before blowing up the entire country and becoming a ghost.”

What.

Tommy’s eyes widened as he pressed himself farther against the wall. “Oh my god.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello! Here is your chapter. I hope you enjoyed it.

I learned that you shouldn't dump water on grease fire today, so that was fun. (Edit: Thank you for your concern, but I did not dump water on a grease fire in real life. I was

researching how Techno should put out the fire on the stove, and originally he dumped water on it before the internet told me that was a stupid move.)

Please be nice in the comments. You all are but this is just a friendly neighborhood reminder.

THIS IS A MANDATORY REST STOP. STOP, DRINK SOME WATER, GET SOME SLEEP, DO YOUR HOMEWORK. you have just read about 30k words congrats, this fic is not going anywhere, at least walk around the room for five minutes before sitting back down.

Fight, Fight, Fight

Chapter Summary

“Get the kids!” Techno shouted, rolling out of the way of Dream’s thrust to his chest

Chapter Notes

TW: implied/referenced child abuse, implied/referenced suicide attempt and/or fake suicide, referenced character death, violence, blood, general angst

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A shocked silence hung in the room; the same sort of shocked silence that might follow the news of a death.

The sudden quiet allowed Techno to hear his voices somewhat. He was pretty sure they were screaming at the top of their lungs, but they sounded distant as he tried to wrap his mind around what he was witnessing.

*what. **what.** oh my notch, they’re from the future too. **one of us, one of us.** howwwwww??? aaaaaaaah*

Tommy and Tubbo seemed completely unaware of his internal shock and confusion. They were extremely busy staring at each other, their mouths slightly agape.

Tubbo was the first one to break the silence.

“You too?” he whispered, his voice cracking.

For some reason, Tommy winced at the statement. Still, he gave Tubbo a tiny nod. “I thought I was the only one.” Tommy’s voice was hoarse, as if he had been yelling for hours. “I could’ve *sworn*.”

Tubbo let out a wet laugh. “I thought that too before Schlatt spilled the beans.”

*schlatTTTT????? **whaaaaattttttt.** oh that makes a lot of sense, actually.*

Tommy closed his eyes, tilting his face toward the ceiling. “Of course,” he muttered, “Because this situation couldn’t get *any* better.”

Techno hated to interrupt emotionally charged conversations, but in his defense, he had no idea what was going on. He kind of needed answers for the sake of his sanity.

“Um... sorry to interrupt,” he said, “But what situation are we talking about now? Because I’m feeling distinctly out of the loop.”

Future. What have we been telling you this entire time??? Future. Future. Maybe you’ll believe us this time. Please believe us, we beg of you.

Tommy let out a shuddering breath but didn’t say anything, keeping his eyes firmly closed. It was almost as if he wanted to shut out the entire world.

Tubbo massaged the bridge of his nose like an old man. And in a slight moment of madness, Techno thought he almost looked like Phil getting ready to talk about something unpleasant.

“Uh, we probably shouldn’t have had this conversation in front of you,” Tubbo said, letting out a wet chuckle.

Tommy snapped his eyes open, looking at Techno like he had never seen him before. He immediately turned back to Tubbo, pushing himself off the wall.

“And why the heck not?” Tommy demanded, “Why shouldn’t we have this conversation in front of him? After all, if *Schlatt* is back, what’s to say that Techno hasn’t been from the future this entire time?!”

Techno was pretty sure he was dreaming at this point, which was a shame, because it meant he would have to knock Wilbur out *again* when Techno finally woke up.

You’re not dreaming, genius. Get with the program.

Tubbo flinched. “Tommy, if Technoblade’s from the future, I would be dead by now.”

Tommy shook his head. “You don’t know that.” He glanced back at Techno, his blue eyes glassier than usual. “He actually helped after Wilbur hurt me a couple days ago. He *never* did anything like that last time around. Remember the festival?”

It stays in the pit. Tubbo in a box what will he do. It stays in the pit. Tubbo went off with a bang. That day was awful. SO much BLOOD. It STAYS in the PIT.

Techno clutched his head in one hand. The voices were getting louder, and Techno wasn’t sure he liked what he was hearing.

Tubbo took a step back, also glancing at Techno, but this time with fear. Based off of what his voices were saying, Techno wasn’t sure he could blame him.

Tubbo balled his hands into fists and turned back toward Tommy. “Techno hates me. He would kill me on sight.”

“Techno has never killed you on sight,” Tommy said, scowling, “If he had, you *would* be dead by now.”

“Yeah, only because he needed his stuff from me!” Tubbo gestured wildly at Techno. “Don’t you remember the horrible things he’s said to you?”

“Which one?” Tommy demanded, “Violence is the universal language or the whole Theseus speech?”

*Oh, that was a good speech. **We nailed that.** And then someone ruined it with a torch. **Violence IS the universal language.***

“Okay, I’m right here,” Techno said, really not wanting all of his future crimes thrown into his face, “So if you would just let me—”

“The Theseus one,” Tubbo interrupted, ignoring Techno completely, “You know, the one where he literally told you to *die like a hero?!’*”

He did *what*.

“That was before!” Tommy ran his hands through his hair. “Besides, I deserved that, you don’t understand—”

“You’re right, I *don’t* understand!” Tubbo shouted, “Why are you trying to defend him? He spawned Withers in L’manberg! He killed me! He’s beaten you to a pulp! He killed Quackity!”

Tommy flung his hands into the air in what seemed to be exasperation. “Oh, L’manberg was already decimated, don’t pretend that Techno did any more damage than Wilbur did.”

“And the rest?” Tubbo demanded.

“I still haven’t forgiven Techno for killing you.” Tommy’s voice was slightly softer at the words. “But the pit was Wilbur’s fault, and Quackity tried to kill *him* first.”

*Very true. **He deserved it.** Quackity was being a jerk.*

“Why are you *defending* him?” Tubbo sounded mildly hysterical. “After everything—”

“Because *Tubbo*, after everything, at least he didn’t kick me out of his home when he caught me stealing, unlike someone else in this room.”

The silence was like someone had shattered glass all over the floor.

*Ooooooh. **Need some ice for that burn?***

Tubbo took a couple more steps back. “That’s not fair,” he whispered.

Tommy scoffed. “How? How is that not fair? It’s the truth!”

Tubbo scowled. “It wasn’t that simple, and you know that!”

“Really?” Tommy crossed his arms. “Because from what I gathered from the situation, I rob George’s house, and suddenly I’m exiled by my best friend. Seems pretty simple to me.”

Tubbo did *what*.

“You skipped about twenty details!” Tubbo’s voice rose in pitch. “What about the probation we gave you? What about the obsidian walls Dream was building around L’manberg? What about your *idiotic* behavior at that meeting? What about the discs?”

“Oh, well I guess since *Dream* told you too, that makes it all better!” Tommy exclaimed, his voice dripping in sarcasm. “Good to know, *buddy*.”

“What else was I supposed to do?” Tubbo demanded, “I never *wanted* to exile you, but it was you or the entire nation!”

“We were going to get Techno to help!” Tommy cried, “We were going to get his help, and you turned around and *exiled* me!”

“Techno wouldn’t have helped, Tommy!” Tubbo all but screamed, “He would’ve laughed and said he told you so!”

We did tell him so. That was exactly what we did.

“So, we shouldn’t have tried at all?” Tommy let out a dry laugh. “Why try when we have such a good opportunity to get rid of such a troublemaker, am I right?”

Tubbo gaped. “It wasn’t like that—”

“Then what was it like, Tubbo?!” Tommy shouted, “Because you gave Dream *exactly* what he wanted in exiling me! What happened to us against Dream, huh?!”

Tubbo took a violent step toward Tommy, who flinched back violently.

“Maybe you shouldn’t have goaded Dream into exiling you in the first place!”

Tommy looked like he had been slapped in the face, his jaw slack. “So, you’re saying this is *my* fault?!”

“Yeah, it kind of is!”

It was Tommy’s turn to violent step toward Tubbo, visibly shaking. “Why can’t you admit that you did something wrong?!”

“I did what I had to do,” Tubbo with a hard voice, “Unlike you, I put my own personal desires aside for the sake of the *people*, who Dream would’ve punished for *your* actions!”

“Don’t make me laugh,” Tommy scoffed, “I may be a screw-up, but that had nothing to do with Dream’s insistence to take me away.”

“Then what was it?”

“He’s *CONTROLLING* us, Tubbo!” Tommy shrieked, a few tears falling from his eyes, “He’s like a freaking puppet master! He wants to tie us up and make us follow his every move!” Tommy let out a sob. “Why do you think he wanted me?! I was the *only* one he couldn’t control! Do you even know what he *did* to me?!”

Tommy was sobbing now. Techno wanted to comfort him, but he wasn’t sure how. Besides, Tommy was still glaring at Tubbo so violently that Techno was pretty sure comfort would not be well received.

Tubbo stared at Tommy, opening and closing his mouth like he was trying to breathe in the void.

Techno vaguely realized his ears were ringing. Then he realized that he hadn’t heard Chat for most of that argument. He hadn’t even noticed that he tuned them out.

He was beginning to hear their echoes again, but Techno couldn’t make out what they were saying. He took this as his opportunity to speak.

“Okay,” he said, “Let me get this straight. You two—” He pointed at Tommy and Tubbo. “—are from the future.”

Tubbo nodded mutely, tears running freely down his face. Tommy was rubbing his arm across his eyes, clearly trying to repress his sobbing.

“Yep,” he choked out, “Pretty wild, huh big man?”

Pretty distressing, more like.

“Well, I can confirm I am *not* from the future,” Techno said, “Let me see if I can’t get the story straight. I’m assuming we won the war, because Wilbur made Tommy president.”

Tubbo and Tommy nodded.

yep. sounds about right. really annoying of him. there was heck to pay.

“Tommy refused, and Tubbo became president instead.”

Once again, affirmation.

“Wilbur blew up the country and died.” Possibly by Philza’s hand. Techno chose not to mention that part. “And I got mad so... I spawned withers?”

“And told Tommy to die like Theseus,” Tubbo added helpfully.

once again, we nailed that speech.

Horror pooled in Techno’s stomach. He understood why he would be justified in spawning withers, but to wish death upon his little brother? “Right.” He swallowed. “So, after I... did *that*, Tommy robbed George’s house and got exiled because Dream was mad.”

Tommy flinched. Techno took that as a yes.

*It was pretty funny. **At first.** We did warn him. **Pretty sure Theseus didn't have nightmares about Lycomedes.** Well, Lycomedes did kill him in the end.*

This wasn't funny at all.

“Dream did unspeakable things, I killed Quackity, and somewhere in there, I killed you—” He pointed to Tubbo. “—and beat Tommy up.”

Both Tommy and Tubbo winced.

“But the last one wasn't really your fault,” Tommy quickly said, his voice still thick with tears, “Wilbur forced you into that.”

“I was still the one that did it, though,” Techno said, looking Tubbo in the eyes, “So I still need to take at least some responsibility.”

*In all fairness, we were really into it at the time. **SO MUCH BLOOD.** Wilbur was being a jerk. **WE COULD JUST TAKE A KNIFE RIGHT NOW AND KILL HIM** I mean, he is unconscious, it wouldn't even be hard. **YOU HEAR THAT TUBBO?? TAKE SOME GOSH DARN RESPONSIBILITY SON.***

Techno was already missing Chat's quietness from a few minutes ago.

Tubbo was silent at Techno's words, but his eyes were directed to the floor, so maybe he had indirectly gotten through to the kid.

Tommy scuffed the ground with his foot and broke the awkward silence. “Well, listen,” he said, wiping away his tears, “You two just go. I'll be fine here.”

SERIOUSLY. ALL THAT AND YOU SERIOUSLY EXPECT US TO LET YOU STAY. LET HIM STAY IF HE WANTS TO STAY. NO, YOU ARE LEAVING WITH TUBBO, YOUNG MAN.

“Absolutely not,” Tubbo said, his voice cracking, “I've already lost you once, I'm not losing you again.”

Tommy scowled. “I didn't know you cared, Mr. *President*,” he muttered bitterly.

Tubbo flinched.

“Besides,” Tommy said more boldly, “I don't want to be within ten feet of Schlatt, future or no. Honestly, Tubbo, you lecture me for forgiving Techno, but you're willing to forgive Schlatt at a drop of a hat?”

“It's not like that.”

“How? How is it not like that?”

Techno cleared his throat. “Children, I think this can wait for later.”

Tommy turned to Techno and opened his mouth, probably to yell at him, but Techno quickly raised an arm to silence him.

Techno could hear the sound of *swords* clashing together. And *yelling*? What was going on?

“Do you hear that?” he asked, straining his ears.

YES. *VERY SUS. IS IT DREAM?? WHY WOULD DREAM BE HERE??*

“What is it?” Tubbo whispered.

“You two stay here,” Techno commanded, “I’ll go check it out.”

He didn’t wait to hear Tommy’s enraged reply. Instead, he dashed out of the kitchen and ran toward the source of the noise.

He entered the main ravine and froze.

It... definitely wasn’t what Techno was expecting. Then again, he wasn’t exactly sure what he had been expecting.

DREAM. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD. KILL THE FLORIDA SIMP

Chat was being pretty narrow minded about the scene that was currently unfolding.

They weren’t wrong. Dream *was* there. Dream with his stupid porcelain mask and his even more stupidly painted-on smiley face. He was in a relaxed stance, blocking his attackers with obvious ease.

What was far more interesting was the fact that *Quackity* and *Fundy* were Dream’s attackers, running at him with enchanted swords raised.

Even from here, it was painfully obvious Dream was playing with them.

BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD. Remember when we put a pickaxe through Quackity’s teeth? Good times, good times. Let’s do it to Dream this time. YASSSSSS. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD.

Well, how could he refuse, really?

Techno pulled out his sword and sprinted toward Dream, his heart beating to the rhythm of his feet hitting the ground. He raised his sword and swiped *down*—

Dream spun around and blocked the blow with a deafening clash, the impact causing Techno’s teeth to slam together.

With a grunt, Dream pushed him back. Bits of ash and dirt sprayed into the air as Techno slid backward, and he shifted on his feet to regain balance.

LET THE 74th HUNGERGAMES BEGIN. MAY THE ODDS EVER BE IN TECHNOBLADE'S FAVOR. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD.

"Holy crap!" Techno could hear Fundy shout. Quackity swore loudly in Spanish.

"Get the kids!" Techno shouted, rolling out of the way of Dream's thrust to his chest

Techno jumped to his feet and fainted for Dream's head before shifting his strike's trajectory. His sword whistled toward Dream's leg instead.

Dream danced out of the way. Shifting to Techno's left side, he swiped his sword toward Techno's neck.

Techno spun toward and shuffled back. The sword sliced through a small portion of Techno's braided hair instead.

THE HAIR. Most of it is still intact. KILL HIM WITH FIRE. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

Techno wasn't sure how long he and Dream continued like that, but finally he heard running footsteps approaching. Only two pairs. Where were the others?

He didn't have much time to think about it as Dream blocked one of Techno's blow with another resounding crash.

"Just Tubbo and Fundy," Dream huffed, pushing Technoblade back.

"What?" Techno blocked another strike. He countered it with a thrust to Dream's abdomen. The strike clashed against Dream's armor.

HA! I HOPE THAT HURT, GREEN BOY! BRUISED RIBS. CRACKED RIBS. FRIED RIBS. Oh, I love fried ribs.

Dream shuffled back. He pulled a regen potion out of his inventory and immediately downed it.

"I only want Tommy," Dream said. He tilted his head slightly before dashing back toward Techno.

DEATH WOULD BE MERCIFUL TO THE LIKES OF YOU. BLOOD. PROTECT THE BOI. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

Eventually, more footsteps began approaching. Good.

Techno ducked under another strike and leapt back to his feet. With a snarl, he sliced toward Dream's mask. He wanted to see the man *bleed*.

"TECHNO!"

TOMMY. YOU FOOL. THE BOI.

Technoblade froze.

Dream didn't.

Shifting on his feet, he thrust his sword forward.

Techno heard a shick as the sword entered his abdomen. He stumbled back. His vision started swimming. He stared down at the sword in his stomach.

The agonizing pain followed, but Techno barely blinked at it. This wasn't his first time being stabbed.

"TECHNO!"

Tommy's unearthly shriek snapped Techno out of his shocked state, and he snapped his head back up toward Dream.

Dream was holding something, probably a potion, and looked ready to throw it at Tommy, who Quackity was currently dragging up the stairs out of Pogtopia.

TOMMY. TOMMY. TOMMY RUN. TOMMY RUN. PROTECT, PROTECT, PROTECT, PROTECT

Adrenaline filled Techno's veins. Disregarding the sword in his stomach completely, Techno rammed himself into Dream. Dream let out a startled cry and let go of the potion he was holding. It crashed into the ground with a loud shatter.

Immediately, Techno's limbs became heavy. Techno tried to regain his balance, but it was as if he were moving underwater. Each one of his movements were at a snail's pace.

Tommy was still screaming. "TECHNO! Quackity, let go of me!"

SLOWNESS. TECHNOSLOW. DRINK MILK. TOMMY. TOMMY RUN. THANK GOD FOR QUACKITY, LOOK AT HIM DRAGGING THE BOY AWAY.

In seconds, Quackity and Tommy were out of sight. Good.

Dream slowly reached into his inventory. Probably for milk. That was actually a good idea.

Techno slowly reached for the milk in his inventory, and even more slowly put it to his lips and began to drink the creamy liquid.

And then everything became fast again. Techno stumbled forward, suddenly aware of the sword still sitting comfortably in his gut. It's a miracle he hadn't bled out yet.

Quickly, Techno pulled the sword out and ate a gapple in his inventory. He let out a small sigh as the pain mostly receded.

LOOK OUT. GREEN TELLETUBBY INCOMING.

Techno barely had time to turn as Dream smashed into him, slamming Techno into the ground. Techno's head burst like a migraine, and a metallic taste filled his mouth.

"You screwed up this time, Techno," Dream said dangerously, pressing the edge of his blade against Techno's neck.

"Well, you know," Techno grunted, spitting out some blood, "you can't win them all."

Dream let out a frustrated growl. "Give me one good reason why I shouldn't kill you right now."

WE'RE TOO AMAZING. WE'VE CHANGED OUR WAYS. IT'LL GIVE TOMMY MORE MISERY TO KNOW THAT WE WERE BEING TORTURED. YOU WANT TO BE TORTURED?? I DON'T WANT TO DIE. KILL US, I DARE YOU. Do it.

"It'd be kind of boring," Techno grunted, "To simply kill your rival. I don't know, doesn't exactly seem to be your style." Techno gave the tiniest shrug of his shoulders, smirking. "But if you want to, go for it, it's not like this is my last life."

Dream was silent, tilting his head as if he were thinking the entire thing over. "Fine," he conceded.

Technoblade smiled in spite of himself.

The kids were safe. *Tommy* was safe.

Dream flipped the sword around in his hand, slamming the pommel of his sword against Techno's head.

Everything went dark.

Chapter End Notes

I'm sorry.

I think we're having a Quackity POV next chapter, but don't hold me to that.

KILL THE FLORIDA SIMP was recommended to me in the comments. The moral of the story is, if you have quotes you want to see from the chat, feel free to say so in the comments. (Edit: took out the word homeless bc it seemed kinda insensitive to those without homes.)

I hate fight scenes.

Sorry for any errors! I hope you enjoyed (apart from the cliffhanger lol). <3

The Duck Makes Lemonade

Chapter Summary

Quackity's more confused than Techno, which is really saying something.

Chapter Notes

TW: stabbing, child abuse, manipulation, violence, you know the drill

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Quackity liked to believe that he could handle change well.

But when Schlatt started acting *really* strange, even he did a double take.

It was mostly good things, at first. For instance, when Schlatt walked in on Quackity and Tubbo surrounded by empty beer bottles and shattered glass, Quackity was sure that they were both screwed. At the *very* least, he expected Tubbo to receive a slap on the face.

Instead, Schlatt *smiled* and said, “That’s alright, kid. It was probably for the best anyway.”

And then he walked away. Just walked away. No anger. No yelling, unless you counted his command to pick up the broken glass on the floor. He just... *smiled*. It was like a completely different person had possessed Schlatt’s body.

But Quackity wasn’t about to complain. This was *good* news.

Still, Quackity kept an eye and ear out for any suspicious behavior. Come to think of it, Tubbo emptying out all of those bottles was pretty out of character for him.

And then there was all that TNT that they unearthed from L’manberg. The sheer amount of TNT was ridiculous. Like, what was Wilbur thinking?

Quackity couldn’t stop the suspicion that rose up inside of him when Tubbo started talking downright *bitterly* about Wilbur and Tommy’s exile. He was directly speaking out against Schlatt’s decrees, what else was Quackity supposed to think?

But it turned out that Schlatt was letting Tommy back into Manberg, which... made sense, actually. As much as Quackity wanted to say that Tommy was dangerous, chaotic, and far too loyal to Wilbur, the fact remained that Tommy was still a kid. And Quackity would be lying if he said that he wasn’t a bit chaotic when he was Tommy’s age too.

And if Wilbur wanted to blow up an entire country, Quackity could see the importance of getting Tommy away from him as soon as possible.

So Quackity accepted the fact that Schlatt and Tubbo had suffered from a strange form of growth of character very suddenly and moved on from the fact. Schlatt had changed for the better. Tubbo had just lost some of his childhood innocence, and that particular change was pretty doomed to happen from the start.

But even with accepting this strange turn of events, Quackity couldn't turn away from the fact that Schlatt shut himself in his office all day yesterday, and then was about to do it again *today*. From what Quackity had seen from Schlatt the day before, the man was very clearly not feeling well.

Quackity decided he should probably check up on him, just to make sure he wasn't slowly dying.

So, Quackity knocked on the wooden doors to Schlatt's office, getting ready to find out what's wrong.

Withdraw. Withdraw turned out to be what was wrong.

Listen, Quackity appreciated that Schlatt was trying to go sober; he really did. But it was at that moment that Quackity decided that Schlatt was an absolute *idiot* when it came to his health. Why hadn't he immediately checked into a hospital the minute he started suffering symptoms?

When Schlatt had his first seizure, Quackity thought he was going to have a heart attack. When all of this was said and done, Quackity was *definitely* going to deck Schlatt in the face for giving him gray hairs early. Honestly, why hadn't he checked himself into a hospital?

And then Wilbur had to call, because *of course* he just *had* to call right as Schlatt started having seizures.

Quackity took the communicator from Schlatt after he collapsed a second time, taking control of the conversation with Wilbur. Fundy bent over, trying to make sure if Schlatt was alright.

"Wilbur," Quackity said tersely, interrupting whatever monologue he was saying.

There was a millisecond's worth of pause. "Where's Schlatt? I was speaking to him."

"It's none of your beeswax where Schlatt is, because right now you are speaking to *me*, and you are going to tell me *right now* what the hell is going on here."

"Fine," Wilbur spat, "If you *must* know, I have captured Tubbo, and I am going to kill him, but I won't tell you when." His voice became condescending. "I'm sure you'll stage a rescue in time."

When Tubbo said that Wilbur had lost his moral compass, Quackity did not expect *this*. Hadn't Wilbur and Tubbo fought in a literal war together? Sure, they might be on opposite

sides now, but surely some of that old camaraderie would prevent him from cold-blooded murder.

It seemed that Quackity thought too highly of Wilbur, which was funny since he hadn't thought all that highly of him to begin with.

The fact that Wilbur was quick and willing to kill a sixteen-year-old made Quackity's blood *boil*.

And Quackity had *no idea* how much time they had before Wilbur slit a knife across Tubbo's throat.

"Screw you," Quackity snarled, doing his best to infuse as much venom as possible into his voice, "You're going to kill a sixteen-year-old? Do you realize how *sick* that is?"

"Oh, like you wouldn't do the same thing to Tommy if he stepped one foot in the wrong direction," Wilbur said, sounding aggravated.

Kill Tommy? Why the hell would they do that? Because he was exiled? That was the height of extremity.

"Of course, we wouldn't—"

"Then what *would* you do?!"

"I don't know," Quackity said sarcastically, "prison?!"

Wilbur's voice began bordering onto a shout. "Prison, like when you shot an arrow through my heart? Prison, like when you're literally planning on luring my brother into a trap and killing him in cold blood?!"

Quackity furrowed his brow in confusion. What trap?

Out of the corner of his eye, Quackity saw Schlatt hurry to his feet and reach for the communicator. Quackity stepped to the side.

"Screw you," he growled again before slamming the 'end-call' button down with a furious click.

They had to drag Schlatt to the hospital.

As they walked to the hospital, Schlatt spoke, sounding more focused than he had their entire trip.

"Listen, whatever you do, listen to me now Quackity."

Schlatt sounded so broken and desperate that Quackity couldn't do anything *but* listen. "You remember that bunker?"

Quackity had a feeling he knew where this was going. "Yeah?"

“That tunnel leads straight to Pogtopia, where Wilbur is,” Schlatt said, his words becoming more rushed, “I’ve sealed some of it off, because I didn’t want Tubbo doing anything reckless, but clearly it didn’t work.”

They entered the hospital building.

“So, you want me to go through the tunnel and rescue Tubbo?” Quackity asked, just to clarify.

He glanced over at Fundy, who was explaining Schlatt’s situation to a nurse.

“Yes,” Schlatt moaned, “I can’t help him right now, but I can’t let him die. Save Tommy too while you’re at it.”

A day ago, Quackity would have questioned if Tommy needed saving from his own brother. Now, he didn’t doubt it at all.

“Okay, yeah, we’ll do that,” Quackity said.

As soon as they made sure Schlatt was well situated and had a security guard at the hospital, Quackity and Fundy went straight to the bunker, drinking potions of swiftness to get there faster.

It had only maybe been twenty minutes since they ended the phone call with Wilbur. The hospital had only been about ten minutes away from the White House, and Tubbo’s bunker another five, with Quackity and Fundy quickly grabbing some gear on their way. Still, every moment they wasted to mine the sealed off tunnel was agonizing. Tubbo could die at any minute, and they were still trying to get through this damn tunnel.

But finally, *finally*, they reached the end of the tunnel. Finally, they were in Pogtopia. Finally, they could get the jump on Wilbur and rescue the teens.

Except the universe apparently hated Quackity.

Because none other than *Dream* himself was standing in the middle of Pogtopia, his hand resting casually on the hilt of his sword.

“Well, this was unexpected,” Dream said smoothly, “What brings you boys here?”

Fundy was already pulling out his sword, a furious glare on his face. “Get out of the way, Dream,” he snarled.

Dream hummed. “You know, I would,” he said, “Except you haven’t exactly told me what you’re doing here, so for all I know, you’re going to hurt someone.”

“The opposite,” Quackity said, reaching for his own sword, “We’re going to rescue some children. So, if you would just step aside, that would be greatly appreciated.”

Dream straightened, pulling out his weapon. “Well, in that case,” Dream said, taking a step closer to Quackity and Fundy, “I’m afraid I can’t let you do that.”

“Try and stop us,” Quackity growled.

Dream only let out a small laugh as both Quackity and Fundy raised their swords and ran at him. Dream effortlessly dodged and blocked both of their strikes.

Quackity’s heart sunk. This was a losing battle.

Quackity gritted his teeth, clutching onto the handle of his sword tightly. It didn’t matter if it was a losing battle. Schlatt needed him to rescue Tubbo and Tommy. He couldn’t let Schlatt down, not while Schlatt was fighting for his life in a hospital room.

From the way Fundy huffed and shifted himself into position, he felt much the same way.

And then Dream suddenly spun around, a loud clash practically shaking the ravine as Dream pushed back none other than *Technoblade*.

Quackity swore loudly, mostly from the shock. What the hell was even going on anymore?

“Holy crap!” Fundy shouted, watching as Techno rolled out of the way of Dream’s sword. Quackity wasn’t sure if it was from shock, or from the sheer impressiveness of the fight that was unfolding right in front of them. Dream and Technoblade moved like their swords were literally a part of their bodies, moving so quickly that Quackity had hardly any idea of what was going on.

Now, Quackity *knew* that they would’ve had no hope of beating Dream.

“Get the kids!” Technoblade shouted suddenly.

Quackity suddenly remembered why he was here in the first place.

Fundy led the way this time, and Quackity didn’t even think to doubt him. At times like these, Fundy’s enhanced senses were going to be a life saver in finding Tommy and Tubbo in time, especially considering that they *hadn’t seen Wilbur yet*.

Fundy skidded to a stop in front of a door, and Quackity immediately burst inside, not even giving a crap about consequences anymore.

And then he immediately froze in horror, icy dread going down his spine.

Because Wilbur was standing, swaying like he was drunk, and pointing a sword at Tommy, who was standing directly in front of Tubbo.

At the sound of Quackity bursting into the room, however, Wilbur snapped his head around. When his eyes landed on Quackity and Fundy, his expression was a hard glare.

“What is with today?!” he shouted, “First, Techno! Then, *you*, Tommy!” Quackity didn’t miss the way Tommy flinched at the statement. “And now you two come in.”

Wilbur’s gaze became *deadly* when he saw Fundy standing close behind Quackity.

“And my traitor of a son is here too,” Wilbur snarled, “I suppose this is just a happy reunion.”

Quackity stomach churned as Wilbur smiled suddenly.

Fundy pushed passed Quackity, looking imploringly at his father. “Dad, please—”

“You don’t get to call me that anymore!” Wilbur shouted, “You don’t get to call me that after you sided with *him*.”

“Schlatt’s respected me more than you ever had!” Fundy shouted, “And besides, I’m pretty sure *he* would never actively try to kill children!”

“He’s trying to kill Tommy!” Wilbur shrieked, “He’s been trying to kill Tommy this entire time!”

Quackity knew that was completely false. There had been no plans for killing Tommy, and even if there were, Tubbo would *certainly not* have anything to do with it.

Speaking of Tommy and Tubbo, Tommy was still standing in front of Tubbo, who looked about ready to grab a sword and stab Wilbur himself.

Quackity figured that there was no time like present to grab the kids and go while Fundy had Wilbur properly distracted.

“Nobody is going to kill Tommy! We just want to stop *you* from killing Tubbo!”

“Like I’m supposed to believe that after you *left* me!”

Quackity quickly went over to Tommy and Tubbo, grabbing them by the wrist. Both children flinched *violently*, and Quackity quickly let go.

“We should get out of here while we have a chance,” Quackity whispered.

Tommy nodded. “Good thinking, Big Q,” he said, “Tubbo, now’s your chance.”

Tubbo spun around, glaring at Tommy. “I am *not* leaving you.”

Quackity massaged his forehead; he felt a headache coming on. “Both of you are coming with me, and we are leaving *now*.”

He realized too late that Fundy and Wilbur had stopped shouting. He didn’t realize until the tip of a sword was resting against Quackity’s neck.

“You’re not taking them anywhere,” Wilbur whispered, his voice sounding like poison.

“Wilbur,” Tommy said, his voice cracking.

“Fundy,” Quackity said, ignoring the panic that was slowly building up inside of him, “I want you to take Tubbo and *go*.”

Protests immediately met Quackity’s command.

“You think I’m just going to leave you here with Wilbur?!” Fundy exclaimed.

“I’m not leaving without Tommy,” Tubbo said firmly.

“Tubbo, *please* listen to Quackity and go,” Tommy begged, “*Please*, I’ll be fine. I promise I’ll be fine.”

“Well you heard him, Tubbo,” Wilbur said, sounding like he couldn’t decide if he should be gleeful or irritated, “Leave, go, scram.” His voice hardened as he returned his gaze to Fundy. “And I never want to see you again.”

Quackity wanted nothing more than to sock Wilbur in the face for that comment, but he was currently being held at sword point, so he had to settle himself for a glare.

“I have the situation under control,” Quackity promised Fundy, “Just take Tubbo and *go*.”

For a fraction of a moment, Fundy still stood still, as if processing the command. Then, he nodded, grabbed Tubbo, and sprinted out of the room, ignoring Tubbo’s startled cry.

That left Quackity, Wilbur, and Tommy in the kitchen.

“Well, this certainly was not how I planned the day,” Wilbur said. He smiled at Quackity like he had won an interesting prize. “I suppose I have you to thank for that.” His face flickered, and his next words were a low growl. “And Technoblade.”

And Quackity witnessed something he never thought he would witness.

Tommy—TommyInnit, the kid who would yell and swear with no regard for other people’s feelings, the kid who was reckless and stubborn and sometimes dangerous, *that* Tommy—got to his knees, clinging to the bottom of Wilbur’s jacket.

And he started *begging*.

“Wilbur, Wilbur, please,” the boy babbled, as if his life depended on it. *Or Quackity’s*.

“Wilbur, let him go, he hasn’t done anything to you, he hasn’t hurt me, just let him go, I won’t let him take me away, I’m not going anywhere, remember, I promised I wasn’t going anywhere, and I don’t plan on going anywhere, but please, please, let him go, please don’t kill him.”

Either it was opposite personality week and nobody bothered to tell him, or something had gone horribly, *horribly* wrong.

Wilbur’s face twisted into a different smile, less sadistic and more... tender. But there was an underlining expression underneath the tenderness that Quackity couldn’t place, couldn’t explain. All he knew was that it was very *wrong*.

“Oh, Toms,” Wilbur cooed, like he was talking to a baby, “You know I want to believe you, but I can’t trust your emotions not to get the better of you.”

“I promise, I won’t do anything,” Tommy said, staring imploringly up at Wilbur, “As long as you don’t kill anyone, I’ll do whatever you want, go wherever you want me to go. Just, *please*.”

This time, Wilbur’s smile was triumphant.

To Quackity’s utter astonishment, Wilbur actually took the sword off of his neck. Tommy sagged in relief.

Quackity didn’t wait to see what would happen next. Instead, he surged forward, slamming Wilbur against the wall with every ounce of strength he possessed.

Wilbur was actually pretty light, all things considered. Wilbur’s sword fell out of his hand and clattered onto the floor as Quackity raised his fist and *smashed* it into his face.

There was a crack, and Quackity was pretty sure he broke Wilbur’s nose. Quackity smiled.

Tommy was screaming. Quackity ignored him.

As Wilbur was doubled over, clutching onto his bleeding nose, Quackity grabbed the sword off of the ground and rammed the butt of it against Wilbur’s head. Wilbur collapsed in a heap.

“What are you doing?!” Tommy was screaming, tugging at Quackity’s arm, “You’re going to kill him! He’s only got one life left, genius! If he dies, it’s game over!”

Tommy was definitely angry amidst all that hysteria, much to Quackity’s relief. The Tommy he knew wasn’t completely gone, at least.

“He’s not dead,” Quackity said, “Though I’m not sure it wouldn’t be better for everyone if he was.”

Tommy looked stricken. “You can’t kill him.” The words came out in a rush. “You can’t kill him.”

Were those tears forming in Tommy’s eyes?

Quackity was not prepared for this.

“I’m not going to kill him,” Quackity said, “Okay? But I am going to get you out of here.”

Tommy scowled. “No. I’m not leaving. Just leave without me.”

Quackity let out an exasperated moan. “Why are you so set on staying here? He’s clearly not stable to be around!”

“He’s my brother!” Tommy shouted, “And I need to be there for him, or else he’s just going to end up dead!”

Quackity grabbed Tommy by the shoulders but let go after the teen flinched again. “Listen to me carefully, Tommy. If Wilbur were in his right mind, would he want you to stay with this

version of him?”

Tommy stiffened, like he was lost in a memory. Quackity waited, desperately hoping that Tommy would see sense.

Tommy crossed his arms. “Fine,” he muttered, “Fine, let’s just go.”

Oh, thank *Notch*.

They had to head for the stairs. The tunnel would be too easy for Dream and Wilbur to follow them down. It would be easier for Dream and Wilbur to lose their trail in the expansive outdoors.

Quackity led Tommy back down the hallway, both of them running for dear life. When they reached the ravine, Quackity could still hear the fighting sounds. Technoblade and Dream were apparently *still* at it.

Quackity didn’t have time to be impressed however, because while Quackity had started running around the fight and toward the stone stairs, Tommy was no longer following behind him.

“TECHNO!”

Quackity spun around. Tommy was standing stock still, staring at the fight unfolding right in front of him.

It was at that moment that Quackity realized that Tommy was a complete *idiot* when it came to his own safety. And in this case, Techno’s.

Because Technoblade froze and Dream stabbed him. *Stabbed* him. *Stabbed* the Blade.

Quackity didn’t have much time to dwell on it, however, because Tommy was still standing there, and Quackity was pretty sure Dream wasn’t going to allow him to escape.

So, as Tommy shrieked for Technoblade, Quackity sprinted back toward him and grabbed him firmly by the arm, dragging him up the damn stairs.

They wouldn’t have made it if Dream had managed to throw that potion. But Technoblade came in the clutch again, as he *slammed* himself into Dream with a sword still *lodged* in his *stomach*.

Instead of Tommy and Quackity getting hit with the potion of slowness, eliminating all hope of escape, Dream and Techno were hit with the potion of slowness, and suddenly, Tommy and Quackity’s chances got twenty-times better.

So Quackity continued dragging Tommy as the teen screamed and screeched for Technoblade.

There was already a hole mined into the dirt wall at the top of the stairs. Clearly, Fundy had the sense to go out this way too.

Tommy was still shouting furiously at Quackity, demanding that they turn back and help Technoblade.

“Tommy, unless you want Dream and Wilbur to find you, you need to run straight to Manberg without me dragging you,” Quackity said, interrupting Tommy’s furious shouting.

Tommy shut his mouth and glared. “I hate you,” he muttered.

“That’s fine,” Quackity said impatiently, “Let’s run.”

And apparently miracles did happen, because for the second time that day, Tommy listened to Quackity and *ran*.

Chapter End Notes

Potion effects only typically last for eight minutes at best, just saying.

I'm sorry if this chapter is not as good or tidy as the others, but I really wanted to get it out today, so I was mildly rushing.

I'm not a hundred percent sure who's pov the next chapter is going to be. I *really* want to write Dream and Wilbur interludes, but logically, they'd fit better farther into the story.

I edited a couple of phrases in the last chapter to imply that the fight scene was longer so that these conversations could actually happen.

Anyway, that's probably enough notes, I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and have a great rest of your day/evening. <3

Punch that President

Chapter Summary

Tommy is sad. Phil gets news. Technoblade wakes up.

Chapter Notes

TW: panic attacks, concussions, injury, broken nose, depression

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Tommy first reached L'manberg (Tommy refused to call it Manberg), Quackity escorted him to a secure room in the White House, trying to hide him from the gaping citizens.

Tommy hadn't left that room since. Nobody could get him to leave.

And it wasn't for lack of trying on Tubbo, Quackity, and Fundy's part. Every day, Tubbo and Fundy visited, talking to him from outside the door. Tommy was just grateful that nobody barged in.

The conversations were pretty one sided, though.

"To think that Da-Wilbur would lose it like that," Fundy had said on the first day of Tommy's solitude, "I can't imagine what it was like to live with him. I'm sorry."

Tommy didn't reply. Tommy never replied.

Tubbo visited a little after Fundy did. Based off of the way the door would move, Tommy had a feeling that Tubbo was leaning against it.

"Tommy..." Tubbo said, his voice sounding slightly thick, "I, uh, thank you. Thank you, for still trying to protect me."

Tommy almost replied to that, but he didn't. He wasn't sure he would know what to say anyway.

Quackity would knock on the door three times a day with food. Tommy would open it, give Quackity his dirty dishes from before, and take the new food from him. No words were exchanged between them, but Tommy had a feeling that Quackity would start making objections if Tommy didn't eat everything on the plate.

“What are you even doing in there?” Fundy asked on the second day.

Like always, Tommy didn’t say anything. Fundy would think him pretty pathetic if he knew anyway.

Because Tommy didn’t do anything in his small room. He stared out the window sometimes; he slept a lot; he curled up in a corner and stewed in his thoughts.

Tommy shouldn’t have left. Tommy shouldn’t have left Wilbur. Now Wilbur had no one. Tommy was the only one Wilbur had left, and now Wilbur had *no one*.

Not only that, but Technoblade was in the hands of *Dream*, all because of Tommy’s cowardice. Tommy could’ve helped; Tommy could’ve saved Techno. Now, Techno had a gruesome stab wound and was at Dream’s mercy.

And at Dream’s mercy, Techno could be hurt, and manipulated, and abused, and traumatized. And those were things that Techno should never be because he was *Techno*. He was the *Blade*. The Blade wasn’t like Tommy; *Techno* wasn’t like Tommy. He wasn’t a coward, or an ignorant little child, or a weakling. Techno was strong, and intelligent, and brave.

But could anyone stay that way with Dream whispering pretty little lies every single day, slowly degrading someone into a shadow of what they were?

Sometimes when Tommy thought like that, he couldn’t breathe, and then he couldn’t think, but at least no one was touching him, at least no one was demanding Tommy listen to them. But what if they were? What if Tommy was too stupid to hear?

And when he finally started breathing again, Tommy would end up sleeping even more than usual. But then he would wake up with images of Dream and Wilbur burned across his mind, and Tommy wouldn’t sleep at all.

The festival had been canceled for obvious reasons. That didn’t stop the populace from theorizing. Rumors from ‘Tubbo and Tommy are Schlatt’s secret love children’ and ‘Wilbur is planning a full-scale terrorist attack’ ran rampant across the streets.

In a different time, Tommy might have found the first one hilarious. Or disgusting. One of the two.

Now, Tommy couldn’t bring himself to care. He couldn’t bring himself to care about *anything*, really.

Tommy was afraid of his new nonfeeling. He was afraid of becoming so distant from everything and everyone that he stopped making any significant bonds.

But at the same time, hadn’t significant bonds gotten Tommy to where he was in the first place?

On Tommy’s fourth day of self-imposed solitude, Fundy was the one to bring back news.

“Schlatt’s back from the hospital,” he said, sounding *happy* about it, the traitor, “We’re really glad to have him—”

Fundy was interrupted by Tommy bursting through the door, immediately veering in the direction of the president’s office.

“Wait, Tommy! He’s a little weak right now!”

Tommy ignored the startled shouts of his nephew as he dashed down the hall. Employees let out surprised cries as Tommy pushed past them, but Tommy didn’t even look in their direction.

Because for the first time in four days, Tommy was *feeling* something.

When he reached the office doors, he burst through them with a thundering boom.

Tubbo and Quackity were standing next to each other near Schlatt’s desk. They were staring at Tommy in shock, but Tommy didn’t care about any of that.

All he cared about was the *ram* sitting in the chair behind the president’s desk, having the gall to look at him in the eyes.

Tommy let out an enraged roar and charged. He wanted to destroy Schlatt. He wanted to ruin him. Tommy wanted to remind him of all of his crimes, of everything he ruined for everyone else. Without him, Wilbur might actually still be alive, actually sane, actually *his* Wilbur. Without Schlatt, Tommy might’ve never been put into exile, Tubbo might never have lost his second life, and everyone might’ve been *happy*.

Just as Tommy’s fist was inches away from Schlatt’s nose, Quackity and Tubbo grabbed Tommy and pulled him back.

“Woah, wait a minute,” Quackity exclaimed, holding a struggling Tommy in place, “Calm down!”

“*No!*” Tommy shouted, *screamed*, his voice cracking violently from days of disuse, “*No*, I will *not* calm down! This is all *his fault!*”

“Tommy,” Tubbo said quietly, having the idiocy to actually look sad.

“*NO*, Tubbo!” Tommy pushed against Quackity and Tubbo, trying to get to that monster, trying to smash his face in, trying to avenge his brother’s death...

“Quackity, Tubbo,” Schlatt said calmly. He said it *calmly*, like Tommy wasn’t about to attempt murder. “It’s okay, let the kid have his punch.”

Both Quackity and Tubbo looked back at Schlatt in shock, but Tommy didn’t care, because their grips had loosened, and Tommy was now running straight toward Schlatt, his heart pounding. He reached over the desk, grabbing the collar of Schlatt’s suit, and allowing his fist to connect with the man’s nose with a resounding *CRACK*.

“I’m *not* a *kid*!” Tommy shouted, taking vindictive pleasure in the blood rushing out of Schlatt’s nose.

“Okay,” Schlatt said calmly, and why was he still so *calm*? Why wasn’t he swearing, why wasn’t he fighting, why wasn’t he at least showing remorse? Or anger even? He was just so *damn* calm.

It was infuriating.

Tommy reached back again, ready to punch again, but hands were grabbing him, hands were pulling him back, too many hands were touching him, he didn’t want to be touched, it made his skin crawl, he couldn’t think—

“It’s not your time to die yet, Tommy.” “I’ll protect you, Toms.” “We’re friends, right?” “It’s okay, Wilbur’s here.” “Everybody hates you, but I don’t.” “You can’t trust anyone except me.”

“Tommy? Tommy!”

Tommy became vaguely aware of himself, but someone was still touching him. Was it Wilbur? God, it was probably Wilbur. Wilbur hated seeing Tommy like this. It worried him. Tommy hated making Wilbur worried.

“Wil, I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m trying to snap out of it, I’m trying, I just *can’t*—”

“It’s not Wilbur, kid,” a new voice said grimly, “Let go of him, he clearly doesn’t enjoy it.”

The hands left, and Tommy relaxed marginally.

“Alright, kid,” the new voice said, “Can you breathe with me?”

Tommy gasped. “Can’t.”

“Yes, you can.” Tommy knew that voice. It was Tubbo. Tubbo was his friend, but he betrayed him, or had he? Tommy didn’t know; he couldn’t think straight. “Tommy, *please*.”

Tommy took a wheezing breath, and it burned.

“Great job,” the new voice, *Schlatt*, said, “Now, do it again, but more slowly.”

Tommy tried, *god* he tried, but it was so damn *hard*.

“You’re doing great,” someone, Quackity probably, lied. Because Tommy *wasn’t* doing great; he was taking a pathetically long amount of time to even *breathe*, Wilbur probably would’ve slapped him by now.

“Just even breaths,” Schlatt said, “Do it with me, in and out.”

In and out. In and out.

Slowly, pathetically slowly, Tommy filled his lungs with more and more air. He became suddenly aware that he had squeezed his eyes shut at some point, that he was sitting on the cold ground, that salty tears were soaking his face, and that he was curled up in a little ball.

He was acting like a scared child. *Pathetic.*

Tommy opened his eyes, blinking at the sudden light. Schlatt, Quackity, and Tubbo were sitting around him, clearly working together to get him to calm down. Schlatt's nose was still bent out of shape, surrounded by dried blood. Tubbo looked like he had been crying, and Quackity looked mildly horrified.

Tommy hated it, so he pulled himself to his feet quickly, causing the three of them to look up at him with what he assumed was general astonishment.

While Tommy tried to smooth down his shirt, Tubbo jumped to his feet. "Are you—"

"I'm fine," Tommy said coldly, not looking Tubbo in the eyes and instead glaring at Schlatt, who was slowly heaving himself to his feet with Quackity hovering over him. "Let's just pretend that never happened."

Quackity gaped at him, "You can't be—"

"Forget it," Tommy said more forcefully, clenching his hands into tight fists, "I'm fine, so don't worry about it."

"Tommy—"

"Just forget it, Tubbo!" Tommy shouted, "You didn't care before, so why do you now?!"

Tubbo blinked, looking hurt. Tommy tried to ignore the guilt already piercing his heart. Damn it, he was being selfish again, wasn't he?

"I thought you hated me," Tubbo said quietly, staring down at the floor, "I thought you didn't want anything to do with me."

Tommy snorted derisively. "You would've been better than *Dream.*"

Tommy clamped his hand over his mouth, immediately snapping his attention toward Schlatt and Quackity. Quackity looked confused? Perplexed? Shocked? Tommy didn't have any idea anymore.

The expression Schlatt wore was way worse. It was *pitying*.

"What're you looking at?" Tommy snapped, lowering his hand back down at inhuman speed, "Because I don't need any of your pity."

Schlatt laughed, and Tommy almost punched him in the gut before realizing that his laugh didn't sound as amused as before. It sounded... kind of like Wilbur's laughter near the end, right before he died. Not deranged... just, tired.

Wilbur was up at the podium, and he just laughed tiredly before giving presidency up to Tommy.

Tommy wondered if he laughed like that when Phil killed him.

And a horrible thought flashed across Tommy's mind. "Were you—" Tommy swallowed. "—were you there?"

Because how else would Schlatt know that he *should* be pitying Tommy? Tommy supposed Tubbo could have told him.

Yeah, that had to be it, Tubbo had to have told him. Schlatt was dead when Tommy went into exile, and he didn't come back as a ghost. There was no way he could've—

"Yeah, kid," Schlatt sighed, massaging his forehead like Phil would after a particularly long day, "Yeah, I was there."

No. *No.*

Tommy stumbled back a few steps, not even trying to hide the pure terror that he felt.

Because he was *there*, Schlatt had been *there*, Schlatt had seen Tommy get abused, and manipulated, and pulled along like a *dog*.

Tommy's fear hardened into anger. "Were you spying on me or some stupid crap like that? Because that's a pretty crappy thing to do."

Schlatt leaned back, giving Tommy a long look. "Yeah, I guess you could say that I was spying on you, but it's not like I had very many good options."

Tommy glared. "What the hell's that supposed to mean?"

Schlatt grinned. "Ghostbur had amnesia; I was not visible to the senses. Trust me, kid, I would've decked Dream about a thousand times over if I could've."

Tommy crossed his arms. "I'm not a kid," he growled, staring at the floor, "And I don't want your lousy protection."

Quackity coughed loudly, and everybody's heads snapped over to him.

"I'm sorry," Quackity said, not sounding sorry at all, "But can somebody please tell me what the hell's going on?"

Schlatt laughed again. "Sorry, Quackity," he muttered, "I forgot you were there."

"Um... should we explain the situation to him?" Tubbo asked unsurely.

Quackity jumped and pointed at Tubbo. "Aha! So, there *is* something going on. I knew it!" He gave them all suspicious looks. "So, are you going to tell me what it is, or do you want me to start guessing?"

“Well, I suppose now we *have* to tell him,” Tommy grumbled.

“You’re not going to believe us,” Schlatt said.

Quackity crossed his arms. “Try me, because I’ve seen a lot of things I wouldn’t believe five days ago.”

Tommy didn’t doubt it. The sheer number of times Tommy had *humiliated* himself in front of Quackity is mortifying, and then he saw Technoblade get stabbed, which was basically unheard of.

“We’re from the future,” Tubbo blurted out.

The way Quackity’s jaw dropped was actually pretty funny. If Tommy weren’t so angry at the world, he probably would’ve laughed.

“Oh,” Quackity said, staring blankly at the three of them, “You’re right, Schlatt, I find that pretty hard to believe.”

Quackity gave Tommy a long stare, and Tommy forced himself not to shift uncomfortably. He instead satisfied himself with returning the stare with a burning glare.

“But, you know, it explains a lot,” Quackity said, looking at Schlatt and nodding, “Better than my ‘Opposite Week’ theory.”

Tommy snorted. “Your what?”

“You guys were all acting really out of character, okay?!” Quackity exclaimed defensively.

Schlatt grimaced for some stupid reason. Don’t ask Tommy; he wasn’t a certified therapist.

“Fair,” Schlatt sighed, “Anyway, Tommy, I have a few things I want to talk to you about.”

Tommy turned around, fixing his glare on Schlatt. Anger still burned his veins whenever he looked at Schlatt’s stupid face, but for some reason, Schlatt’s crooked nose and bloody face filled him with less satisfaction than before.

Maybe it was because Schlatt saw Tommy’s exile, saw exactly what that hell was like for Tommy. Maybe it was because Schlatt was acting nothing like the Schlatt Tommy knew.

“What?” Tommy asked curtly.

“You probably already know that your exile has been officially revoked,” Schlatt said, looking Tommy calmly in the eyes, “You’re a citizen of Manberg—”

“L’menberg,” Tommy cut in.

Tommy resisted the urge to flinch right after he said it. If Schlatt chose to hurt him, then he would prove he was just like the rest, and Tommy could have peace knowing that Schlatt was the monster Tommy always knew him to be.

But Schlatt didn't reach over to hit him. Instead, he tilted his head contemplatively, like he was actually considering what Tommy said.

"You know, come to think of it, maybe we should change the name back," Schlatt murmured, "I'll have to think on that." He returned his attention to Tommy. "Anyway, you're a citizen of this country again, and you're welcome to stay in the White House as long as you'd like."

Tommy opened his mouth, ready to say that he didn't need any of Schlatt's pity gifts, and he would rather die than sleeping in the same building as him. But he stopped himself.

Because as much as Tommy hated to admit it, he felt much safer here than he did outside, especially with both Wilbur and *Dream* on the loose.

Tommy satisfied himself with a tiny nod.

"I want to call Phil," Tommy blurted out, not even thinking before he said it. Well, he said it now, and Tommy wasn't taking it back. He had wanted to call Phil from the beginning. If Schlatt could claim that he changed, he would let Tommy call his father.

Schlatt blinked, looking surprised. Tommy continued staring at him with a cold glare.

"Really?" Schlatt asked, "I mean, you don't need to ask for my permission, you can call whoever you want, but—"

"He can't, actually," Tubbo said quietly, "Wilbur took his communicator. We never got it back."

Schlatt swore. "Alright then," he muttered, writing something down on a card, "I'll get you a new one. Do you have Phil's number? Can you borrow someone else's communicator?"

Damnit, why couldn't Schlatt just be mean? Why couldn't he yell; why couldn't he scream; why couldn't he just prove that he was everything Tommy knew he could be?

Because this version of Schlatt was weirdly nice, and nice was out of character, and out of character meant unpredictable, and unpredictable was dangerous.

Tommy kept his voice closed off. "I don't remember Phil's number." He cursed himself for his forgetfulness.

"I have it," Tubbo said quietly, "Phil's number, I mean. He gave it to me after I snuck into Tommy's house one to many times."

Tommy remembered that. When Tommy was about twelve, Tubbo would constantly sneak into Tommy's room through the window. Eventually, Phil gave Tubbo his number so that he would call for permission to visit instead of scaling the house.

"Can I—" The words stuck on Tommy's throat, and Tommy wanted to scream in frustration.

Tubbo wordlessly pulled his communicator out of his pocket, handing it to Tommy. Tommy took it, nodding gratefully.

“I still hate you,” Tommy informed Schlatt as he stepped out of the room. He closed the door behind him before Schlatt could reply.

Letting out a shuddering breath, Tommy quickly found Phil’s contact on Tubbo’s communicator. With trembling fingers, he pressed call.

Phil was enjoying a morning cup of coffee when his communicator started ringing violently.

Phil calmly pulled it out of his pocket, glancing it. He started. Tubbo’s name flashed brightly on the screen.

Why the hell was Tubbo calling him? Tubbo hadn’t called in ages.

Immediately, Phil’s mind ran through the worst possibilities. Tommy was dead. Wilbur was dead. Techno was dead. Tommy, Techno, and Wilbur were *all* dead.

Phil hadn’t heard from Wilbur since he said that Techno had joined him and Tommy in their ravine. What was it called again? Pogtopia? Ever since then, Phil had a creeping sense of anxiety that something was going to go horribly wrong, but his sons were old enough to fight their own wars. They didn’t need Phil helicoptering them.

But Tubbo calling him? That never happened, and Phil found himself assuming the worst.

Phil hurriedly answered the call.

“Tubbo, mate? What’s up?”

“...Phil,” whispered the voice on the line. The voice who was decidedly *not* Tubbo.

Oh god, was *Tubbo* dead?

“Who is this?” Phil asked, “Where’s Tubbo?”

“Phil, it’s me,” the voice said, “Um, Tommy. Ah... Tubbo’s fine.”

Oh. Oh, *Tommy*.

Phil knew his son, and Phil knew that his son should not sound so soft spoken, should not sound so hesitant, should not sound so *broken*.

“Tommy, mate, what happened?” Phil asked, trying to keep the panic out of his voice, “Why do you have Tubbo’s communicator?”

A laugh. “Um, a lot happened. But, um, Wil-Wilbur took my communicator.”

Shock settled in Phil’s system. Wilbur took away Tommy’s communicator? Why?

“What?”

“Don’t worry about it,” Tommy said quickly, *too* quickly, “It’s not a big deal; he was just trying to protect me, in his own screwed up way.”

“Tommy...” Phil breathed out, horror replacing shock, “Why-what do you mean?”

“It doesn’t matter,” Tommy said, “Well, some of it matters. Wilbur needs help. Like, a lot of help.”

“Help with fighting?” Phil asked, having a feeling that wasn’t the right answer.

“No.” Tommy paused, and Phil wished he could at least see his sons face and get a clue on what was going on in his mind. “Um, he’s in a bad way, Phil; he kept, keeps? I don’t even know anymore. Anyway, he keeps raving about how everyone is a traitor, and he’s incredibly paranoid, and he wants to blow up L’manberg, and I don’t know what to do.”

“Wait a moment,” Phil said, getting to his feet, “Blow up L’manberg? Didn’t he create L’manberg?”

“Phil.” Tommy’s voice became suddenly panicked. “Phil, you can’t kill Wilbur.”

Phil froze.

“Why would I-why would I kill Wilbur?” Phil whispered.

Why would Tommy even think he would do that? Phil *loved* Wilbur. Wilbur was his son; Phil wouldn’t dream of killing him, even if Wilbur handed him the sword himself.

“I don’t know.” Tommy sounded like he was about to cry. “Just, don’t do it, okay? I don’t care if he begs you to, or if he destroys everything, or if he purposefully tries to get me killed because...”

Phil could hear a choked sob on the other side of the line.

“Tommy?” Phil asked, “Tommy, what happened? Has Wil tried to kill you?”

“No!” Tommy exclaimed, “No, Wil would never.”

“Then why did you—”

“It doesn’t matter.” Tommy’s voice was suddenly lacking in inflection now, like he was purposefully masking his every emotion from Phil. “Just, I think you can help Wil, maybe remind him that you love him or something sappy like that, and maybe he’ll think twice about this whole villain thing.”

Phil needed more answers. He needed to know more. What was Wilbur doing? Why did Tommy sound so *unlike* Tommy? What was going on?

“Also, Techno’s been captured,” Tommy said, “By Wil and Dream, but mostly Dream, I think. Still, it would be nice if you could help us save him, because it’s really my fault he’s there in the first place.”

Techno was captured? Since when were Techno and Wil on opposing sides? Weren't they allies?

And to think that Techno had messaged him just a few days ago, saying that everything was going fine. When had things gone so horribly wrong?

Phil knew that Tommy wasn't about to give Phil any of the answers he craved, so instead he said, "Okay, I'm on my way."

Did Phil just hear a sigh of *relief* on the other end of the line? Did Tommy seriously think Phil wouldn't come after hearing all that?

"Thanks."

And with that, Tommy hung up, leaving Phil alone.

Techno woke up to the sound of voices.

WE LIVE. TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES. BUT HE DOES LOSE, APPARENTLY. LOL, LOSERBLADE. TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES.

What happened?

Techno let out a groan and became suddenly aware of the uncomfortable gag in his mouth. Then, he became aware of the pulsing pain he felt *everywhere*. His head and stomach were especially painful.

Right, the fight with Dream. Tommy escaping.

Technoblade catalogued the situation as best as he could. His wrists and ankles seemed to be both tied together uncomfortably, the rope irritating his skin. He was definitely lying in some form of a small, dark room. There was an iron door across from him, but no button in sight.

Great. Just... fantastic.

Oof, we're never going to live this down. YOU HAD ONE JOB. HE DIDN'T DIE. HE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO GET STABBED EITHER! OUR REPUTATION IS AT STAKE HERE.

"Guys," Techno moaned. His voice was incomprehensible through the gag, but he knew Chat would get the general idea. "Do me a favor and shut up."

THIS IS WHAT YOU GET FOR LOSING. I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LOST. WELL, HE DID SAVE TOMMY, SO THERE'S THAT. THAT'S A GOOD THING?? I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE ARE STILL TOMMY HATERS IN THIS CHAT.

Techno couldn't even summon the energy to reply. Why was he so tired?

*Concussion. **DREAM SMACKED YOU REAL GOOD, GENIUS.***

Oh, right, concussion. That would make sense.

There was a loud bang, and Techno looked up to see Dream and Wilbur striding through the doorway. Wilbur looked furious; Dream's lips were set in a neutral calm.

“Well, well, look who's awake.”

Chapter End Notes

Welp, i suppose the best way to solve a POV debate is to do three POVs in one chapter, leaving you with the longest chapter to date.

I'm playing the Phil Watson's B- parenting card. He's not great, but he's trying.

Tommy's having a bad time. So is Tubbo. I should probably give him a POV soon.

The mentioned rumors and press from the citizens are inspired by the [Schlatt is Tubbo's father](#) series by VioletViolentEye. I would check it out!

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed, have a wonderful day, please be nice in the comments. :)

(Also, if anyone were to borrow elements from this story for their own fics, I would really appreciate it if you could just give me a shout-out in the author's notes. <3)

A Calm Sixteenth?

Chapter Summary

“Don’t be the next Schlatt.” “You can’t become the next Schlatt.” Schlatt, Schlatt, Schlatt

And for a moment, Tubbo wanted to punch Schlatt in the face as hard as Tommy had, harder even.

Chapter Notes

TW: Implied/referenced child abuse, past death, manipulation, guilt

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It was the sixteenth when Tommy barged into Schlatt’s office and broke his nose. All things considered, not the most eventful sixteenth in the world, which was a nice change of pace.

And Tubbo had to admit, he couldn’t exactly blame Tommy for the action. Not when he still marveled at the smoothness of his skin where burn scars should be. Not when he flinched away from celebratory fireworks. Not when those damned words followed him everywhere he went during presidency.

“Don’t be the next Schlatt.” “You can’t become the next Schlatt.” Schlatt, Schlatt, Schlatt

And for a moment, Tubbo wanted to punch Schlatt in the face as hard as Tommy had, *harder* even.

But he didn’t. Schlatt was trying, Tubbo *knew* Schlatt was trying. It wouldn’t be fair of him to be angry about that, even if he still woke up with nightmares, even if he studied his skull in the mirror, looking for horns, even if Schlatt had ruined *everything*—

Well, Schlatt hadn’t ruined everything. Dream certainly at least helped things along nicely, and that was an understatement.

“Do you even know what he did to me?!” Tommy had asked, tears running down his face.

No, Tubbo didn’t know, and he hated it. What had Dream done to Tommy to change his friend into a shadow of his former self? Tubbo had already seen what *Wilbur* had done, but

how much of it was Wilbur, and how much of it was Dream?

Tubbo needed answers.

So, while Tommy had stepped out with Tubbo's communicator, Tubbo turned to Schlatt, forcing back the habitual fear that came with looking Schlatt in the eyes.

"What did Dream do to him?" Tubbo asked. Well, more like demanded; Tubbo accidentally used his 'president' voice.

Schlatt sighed, but it sounded almost like a groan. "I think that's something you'll have to ask Tommy yourself, kiddo."

Tubbo didn't scowl, but he *did* feel irritated. "I'm not a kid," he said shortly.

Kids didn't run countries.

"Okay, Tubbo," Schlatt said. He gave Tubbo a look over. "Do you want to punch me too?"

Tubbo stared at Schlatt's crooked nose and the dry blood surrounding it. Tubbo clenched his fist even more tightly. It would be just *so easy* to punch Schlatt and give him a black eye. All Tubbo had to do was raise his fist and aim.

But... violence never solved anything. And even if it was aimed at one of the worst men Tubbo had ever known, Tubbo wasn't sure that even a simple punch wouldn't make him feel sick to his stomach.

Tubbo took a deep breath and unclenched his fist. Already, the action felt liberating.

"I don't want to," Tubbo said quietly. He glanced up at Quackity, half-expecting him to call Tubbo a weak coward.

Instead, Quackity looked *relieved*. "Thank god, I won't have to reset more than a broken nose."

Schlatt laughed before leveling a serious expression back toward Tubbo. Tubbo flinched in spite of himself. Schlatt winced.

"Sorry," he said, "But seriously, if you want to punch me, I can take it. I saw you when Tommy was yelling; you were definitely tempted to let him loose. It's not like I wouldn't deserve it."

Tubbo looked down at his shoes, his stupidly shiny, black shoes. "I just..." Tubbo hesitated. "I just...he's not wrong."

"I know," Schlatt said calmly, "And I'm sorry for everything I did."

"Sorry doesn't fix it," Tubbo said, perhaps a little more harshly than he intended.

But it was true. *Sorry* didn't fix the fact that Schlatt had ordered Tubbo to be killed in public. *Sorry* didn't change the fact that if it weren't for Schlatt, Wilbur might not have changed. *Sorry* didn't change the fact that if Wilbur hadn't changed, Tubbo might not have been president, and Tommy might've never been exiled for a second time.

So, yeah, *sorry* didn't exactly fix it.

"You're right," Schlatt said, "And I promise, I'm going to do everything I can to do better this time around. But, Tubbo, I don't expect you to forgive me." Under his breath, he added, "I know I never will."

Tubbo stared, unsure of what to say. What was he supposed to say to that? Tommy would probably make some scathing remark about how he never planned on forgiving Schlatt. That was all well and good for Tommy, but Tubbo *wasn't* Tommy. And while Tubbo knew that he *hadn't* forgiven Schlatt, a small part of him believed that one day he could.

Besides, being bitter never did anyone good. It was Tubbo (and Quackity's) bitterness toward Technoblade that caused Technoblade to pull himself out of retirement, and Tubbo didn't even *want* to imagine what would have happened if Tubbo hadn't been pulled backwards in time and Technoblade had continued his warpath.

Heck, L'manberg might've been destroyed all over again, and then they would be forced to rebuild. *Again*.

Before Tubbo could even attempt to put these thoughts into words, however, Tommy reentered the room. His face was neutral, and that was almost more worrying than anything Tubbo had seen from Tommy so far.

Because even while Wilbur abused Tommy, at least Tommy was showing emotion. Because that's all Tommy ever did. He *emoted*.

But now, there was nothing. No emotion, just... a coldly neutral gaze.

Tommy walked up to Tubbo, dropping his communicator into Tubbo's hands. "Thank you," he muttered.

Tubbo swallowed, and the question that had been pushing against Tubbo's mind for days now rose up again.

What did Dream do? What did *Tubbo* do?

Well, Tubbo knew the answer to that last part, but somehow, he couldn't bring himself to admit it. Besides, *Dream* was the one who caused all this. Tubbo was just another pawn in his game.

"*I was still the one that did it, though,*" Techno had said, looking like he was staring into Tubbo's soul, "*So I still need to take at least some responsibility.*"

The thought of Technoblade only made Tubbo feel sicker, so he pushed it all aside, instead focusing on Tommy.

“How-how did the talk with Phil go?” he asked, shoving the communicator back into his pocket.

“Fine,” Tommy said, turning to Schlatt, “Phil is on his way. He’s going to help Wilbur. *Not* kill him.”

Tubbo felt a pang in his heart as he remembered Tommy’s guttural scream as Phil put a sword through Wilbur’s chest.

“He’s also coming to help us rescue Technoblade,” Tommy continued. His voice became slightly more bitter. “But that’s no surprise.”

No. Phil had always seemed to favor Technoblade over Wilbur and Tommy.

“Hold up,” Schlatt said. He raised his hand to stop Tommy from continuing, even though Tubbo was pretty sure Tommy was done regardless. “There is no *us* in Technoblade’s rescue. You—”

“You’re not going to do anything?” Tommy demanded, his neutral expression giving way to some anger, “Technoblade saved all of our lives, and you’re not even going to try to save him?”

“That’s not what he said,” Quackity said quickly.

Schlatt sighed. “You didn’t let me finish. You two—” Schlatt pointed at both Tommy and Tubbo. “—are not participating in any rescue missions. We’ll handle it.”

If possible, Tommy’s face became even colder than before. “Let me guess, the *adults* can handle this.” Tommy’s voice took on a mocking tone. “Quiet, Tommy, the *adults* are speaking.”

Schlatt’s face darkened. Tubbo felt like he was missing something here.

“This is not remotely the same thing,” Schlatt said, “It’s really the opposite. I refuse to risk you being in a vulnerable situation with two of your abusers.”

“Oh, but it’s okay for Tubbo to be working in the same building as one of *his*?”

Schlatt flinched. Quackity frowned, glancing at Schlatt.

“*Tommy!*” Tubbo hissed, horrified, “That was out of line.” Schlatt was trying his best; it wasn’t fair to throw his past in his face like that.

Tommy *flinched* at the words, but he didn’t look away from Schlatt. “Come on, we know we were both thinking it.”

Tubbo wasn’t exactly sure who the ‘*we*’ was referring to. Tommy and Tubbo? Tommy and Schlatt? All three of them?

Schlatt's face contorted to a scowl. Tommy's eyes shone triumphantly in the same way they did when he thought he won an argument.

But the scowl on Schlatt's face melted away as soon as it came, and Tommy's face shifted into one of surprise before becoming completely closed off again.

"Quackity, Tubbo," Schlatt said, his voice calm, "Why don't you go out and do something for a bit? I want to speak to Tommy alone."

Tommy stiffened, and anxiety pooled into Tubbo's gut. Schlatt wouldn't hurt Tommy. Tubbo knew this. Schlatt had changed.

Right?

"Schlatt..." Quackity began, looking like he was ready to burst.

Schlatt gave Quackity a meaningful look. "I'll explain everything to you when you get back. I promise."

"Not everything," Tommy said, his voice mostly firm.

"Not everything," Schlatt agreed, "Everything that isn't someone else's personal business."

Tommy didn't relax. Tubbo wondered if Tommy trusted Schlatt's word at all. Probably not.

Schlatt turned to Tubbo, giving him a small smile. "Don't worry," he said, "We'll just talk. If it's something more, you'll know, and I give you permission to kill me. It's not like I don't have lives to spare."

"I'd get arrested for that," Tubbo said, his voice coming out as a strange mix of flatness, sarcasm, and amusement.

Damnit, even Tubbo's own emotions had to be a strange swirl of complicatedness.

"Alright," Quackity said, gently grabbing Tubbo by the shoulders and leading him out of the room.

"Don't worry about me, Tubbo," Tommy said, his voice closed off again, "It'll be fine."

Tubbo knew Tommy was lying. But he was pretty sure Schlatt wasn't.

Quackity led Tubbo into the hallway, shutting the door quietly behind them. "It'll be fine," Quackity said, sounding much more assured than Tommy did, "Come on, amigo, let's go buy some ice cream or something."

Schlatt had started the day feeling pretty refreshed.

It probably had something to do with the fact that he was finally discharged from the hospital and no longer had alcohol in his system. Maybe it was just because it felt good not to have a migraine.

But all good things came to an end, because Schlatt had a feeling that he had a very un-alcohol related migraine coming on.

Because standing before him was a very angry, very *scared* teenager.

They say that anger is a secondhand emotion, that anger was always birthed by some other emotion, whether that be fear, or grief, or who the heck even knows.

Schlatt wasn't entirely sure where his anger came from, back when he was the monster Tommy (and probably Tubbo) believed him to be. It was probably fear, fear of losing the power he had gained, fear of losing control. Or maybe he was just too lost in his drinking. It didn't exactly matter now.

What mattered was the fact that Tommy's anger stemmed from two very obvious sources. Grief and fear.

Tommy's anger toward Schlatt was definitely a mix of the two, but Schlatt suspected that it was primarily the latter. His ranting about Wilbur made that all too clear.

And Tommy wasn't wrong. If Schlatt hadn't exiled Wilbur, maybe things would've been different. Maybe Wilbur wouldn't have gotten lost in his own head, maybe events wouldn't have played out as they did. *Tubbo* certainly wouldn't have lost his second life.

Tubbo. Schlatt's head hurt whenever he thought about the kid too hard. Schlatt inflicted unspeakable pain toward him, both in life and death, and somehow, the kid was still willing to entertain the idea of forgiveness. As a matter of fact, Schlatt wouldn't have been surprised if Tubbo had simply *forgotten* he was supposed to be angry with Schlatt if it weren't for Tommy's outburst.

Speaking of Tommy...

Tommy clearly did not trust Schlatt. At all. And Schlatt didn't blame him. Heck, Schlatt would have been more concerned if Tommy decided to wholeheartedly trust Schlatt instantly. Because while that might be a very *Tubbo* thing to do, it would have been disproportionately out of character for Tommy.

Still, Schlatt would *prefer* Tommy not think that Schlatt had any malicious plans in store for him.

"So," Schlatt said, finally breaking the long silence, "you don't trust me."

Tommy snorted. "Obviously."

Tommy wasn't glaring. His face was passive, but Schlatt couldn't miss the look Tommy's eyes. Schlatt was a businessman first and foremost, and you could learn a lot by looking into a man's eyes.

Hatred and fear filled Tommy's eyes, both so potent that Schlatt had no idea which outweighed the other.

"Listen." Schlatt sighed for probably the fiftieth time that morning. "I'm not going to hurt you. I only want to help make things right."

This time, dark amusement crossed over Tommy's face. "If you think that's going to work on me, you're stupider than I thought, old man."

Schlatt, as luck would have it, was *not* stupid, and he knew exactly what Tommy was thinking.

"*I'm your friend*," Dream had said, blowing up a teenager's only possessions like it was some sick game. And Schlatt was stuck, unable to do anything, only able to watch and scream noiselessly at that masked *monster*.

Never again. He wasn't going to sit at the sidelines. Not this time.

"We don't have to be friends," Schlatt said, "You don't have to like me. You don't have to stay here. You don't have to do anything for me. The only thing I'm not letting you do is stepping anywhere near Dream and Wilbur, and that's—"

Schlatt cut himself short. Tommy wouldn't appreciate the '*for your own protection*' line, regardless of how true it was.

Tommy's eyes widened, but they hardened again soon enough. "You can't expect me to believe that."

"You're right," Schlatt said, "I don't expect you to believe that."

And he didn't. Tommy had been lied to by trusted adults too many times. Schlatt was very pointedly an *untrusted* adult in Tommy's eyes, which meant that the kid had literally *no reason* to trust Schlatt. At all.

Neither did Tubbo, but Schlatt would address that problem later.

"Why'd you say it then?" Tommy challenged, "If it was so obviously a lie?"

"Oh, I wasn't lying," Schlatt said, keeping his voice as calm and casual as possible, "But I don't expect you to believe that I'm telling the truth."

Tommy didn't say anything to that, but Schlatt noticed that his fists were tightening. He hoped the kid wouldn't accidentally break skin.

"Anyway, let's return to the issue at hand," Schlatt said, "You want to help rescue Technoblade."

"He's my brother, genius. Of course I want to rescue him," Tommy said, "Aren't you presidents supposed to be smart?"

Schlatt didn't allow Tommy to get under his skin. He had already made a fatal error in scowling earlier. Schlatt hadn't been angry at Tommy; he had been angry at Dream and Wilbur. Even thinking about them now made Schlatt want to break something.

But scowling was a stupid thing to do, especially when Tommy had looked so *victorious* after Schlatt had done it, like Tommy had been proven right, like he had *wanted* to get yelled at, like he expected to get smacked around.

"I understand that you want to help save your brother," Schlatt said, "But you have to understand that my answer is still 'no'."

Tommy glared, which was refreshing compared to the completely closed-off stare the kid had been trying to maintain. "Why?" he growled, "I'm capable, I can handle myself. It's my fault he's in his hands in the first place, if it weren't for me, none of this would be happening."

"Five minutes ago, you were blaming me for everything that was happening," Schlatt said, "I can promise you that *none* of this is your fault."

"He wanted *me*, not Techno!" Tommy shouted, slamming his hands loudly against the desk, "Techno was protecting *me*!"

"Exactly!" Schlatt exclaimed, "Think about it, Tommy. Dream wants *you*. If you go in to rescue Technoblade with us, *you* will be Dream's number one priority."

Tommy's eyes widened for a fraction of a second before returning to that *damn* emotionless stare. "That's a good thing then," Tommy said, "I can distract him, and get distract both of them. I can be *useful*."

"*Useless*," Dream had sneered to Tommy one night while Schlatt only watched, "*No wonder nobody misses you.*"

"*Hell* no," Schlatt said, standing suddenly. Tommy flinched, and Schlatt sighed, sitting back down. "You are not going back to either of them," Schlatt said firmly, "I am not letting you go through any of that again."

"It wasn't that bad," Tommy muttered.

Schlatt let out a startled laugh. "Not that bad?" he asked, "Not that *bad*? Kid, I literally watched Dream make you throw your stuff into a hole to be destroyed, lie to you, and beat you. What about that is *not that bad*?"

"At least I know what to expect from him!" Tommy shouted, "At least I know what I'm in for! You don't make any sense! You used to be the bad guy, but now you're pretending to be good, and, and... Why were you even watching me anyway? That was my own business, you had nothing to do with it!"

"Oh, well, I'm sorry for being *concerned*," Schlatt said sarcastically, "You were alone with Dream, you expect me to just ignore that?"

Tommy's face became dark. "Everybody else did," he muttered. He blanched before spinning around suddenly. "I'm leaving."

Schlatt didn't try to stop him.

Technoblade wanted to find his nearest sword and stab both of the men standing in the doorway, but that was pretty impossible at the moment.

I'LL STAB 'EM. WITH WHAT GENIUS?? WITH MY PURE FURY AND WRATH. THAT'S NOT HOW IT WORKS. WAIT, WAIT, I HAVE SOME FURY AND WRATH, MAYBE WE CAN MAKE A NUKE. WHY ARE YOU MAKING A NUKE?? I FEEL THE ANSWER SHOULD BE OBVIOUS, MY DEAR SIR.

It was way too early for this.

"Well, hello, gentlemen," Techno said casually, which was pretty difficult, considering that there was a gag muffling all sound coming out of his mouth and he was tied up on the floor.

Apparently, Wilbur was not one for delicacies (or he just didn't hear), because he let out a guttural yell and grabbed Technoblade by the scruff of his shirt.

"You *traitor!*" Wilbur shrieked, spraying spittle all over Techno's face as he shook Technoblade violently, "You let them take him! You let them take my Tommy!"

Oh boy, explosive British boy is at it again. WE'RE PROBABLY GOING TO DIE. IF WE DIE, WE DIE WITH HONOR. FOOL, TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES.

Technoblade would've liked to have said a lot of things, but once again, the gag was kind of preventing him from explaining to Wilbur that Tommy didn't actually *belong* to him.

Dream put a hand on Wilbur's shoulder, causing Wilbur to drop Techno onto the cold stone floor with a painful thump.

RUDE. HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE CONCUSSION?

"Remember, Wilbur," Dream said, "We have a plan to get Tommy back."

Techno did *not* like the sound of that.

OOPS HE DID IT AGAIN. MANIPULATIVE JERK. IF WE KILL HIM CAN WE GET ICE CREAM?

Wilbur let out a deep breath. "Right." He looked down at Techno with a deranged smile. "You hear that, traitor? I have a plan. And you know what the best part is?"

Techno raised his eyebrows in place of saying 'what'.

Wilbur crouched down and pulled a knife out of his trench coat. “It makes you rue the day you ever decided to betray *me*. ”

Well, that just sounded fantastic.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was kind of filler, but it was necessary to push the plot forward, so...

Next chapter is actually going to be kind of fluffy on Tommy and Tubbo's end, and just terrible on Techno's end, so... I hope you look forward to that.

Um, I can't think of anything to say, so please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

No Sixteenth is Calm Fool

Chapter Summary

Tubbo makes a serious realization. Tommy makes a discovery. Dream makes a threat. Phil makes a call.

Chapter Notes

TW: manipulation, blood, amputation, panic attack, knives, implied/referenced child abuse, fainting

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo wasn't used to this.

As he and Quackity sat outside, eating ice cream, Tubbo basked in the absurdity of it all. When was the last time he had just sat like this? When was the last time Tubbo was allowed to just silently exist? When was the last time expectations hadn't pressed down on him like a huge burden on his back?

Even when he had hung out with Niki nearly a week ago, Tubbo hadn't felt this... free. He had been too preoccupied on Tommy at the time; Tubbo was too worried about what he needed to do to help him.

But there was almost none of that right now. Tommy was safe; there was nothing he needed to get done. Tubbo was just allowed to relax.

Well... that wasn't precisely true.

It was funny how the minute one thought about being relaxed, their anxiety comes back full force.

"What's on your mind?" Quackity asked.

Tubbo fidgeted with his sunglasses, wishing he could take them off, but they were his only bastion of defense against nosy citizens.

Tubbo took a deep breath; it wouldn't hurt to explain things to Quackity, would it? "I exiled him."

"Huh?"

Tubbo stared down at his chocolate ice cream, watching the edges melt. It was a good thing it was October, or the entire thing would probably be sludge by now. Tubbo took a depressed lick, not finding as much joy in the rich taste as he might've who-knows-how-many months ago.

"Tommy," Tubbo continued, forcing the name out, "I exiled him."

Quackity blanched. "What? When? How? Isn't he your best friend?"

Tubbo let out a weary laugh. "Really not letting up on those questions, Big Q."

"Well, I'm sorry," Quackity said, clearly sarcastic, "But someone tells me that they exile their best friend in what I assume is the future, and I kinda feel the need to know more."

"Fair," Tubbo said, "Maybe don't talk about the future stuff so loudly, though. We don't need people spreading ridiculous rumors about that."

Tubbo brushed his fingers against the thin scar on his throat, where Wilbur had dug his dagger into Tubbo's neck. Tubbo repressed a shudder. That had been terrifying. Tubbo didn't want to imagine how terrifying Wilbur might be if he knew that Tommy, Tubbo, and Schlatt were from the future.

And Tommy kind of had a point earlier, what's to say that more people were from the future? What if someone against them was from the future? They had gotten lucky with Schlatt deciding to be reformed, but Tubbo couldn't imagine what would happen if *Dream* had come back.

Tubbo shook himself mentally. Dream hadn't come back. They would've known by now.

Right?

"Okay," Quackity was saying, "I won't scream about the time travel. But seriously, what happened?"

Tubbo sighed. "It's a long story."

"Yeah, and something tells me that you've never properly told it before." Quackity took another bite out of his ice cream, and Tubbo felt a small shiver go down his spine. Who bit ice cream? "Come on, it'll probably good for you to tell me."

"I feel like you're trying to trick me into telling you things," Tubbo asked, unable to hide the suspicion in his tone, "Isn't Schlatt going to explain everything to you later?"

Quackity shrugged. "True, true," he said, "But I am an impatient man, and would love to hear more now."

Tubbo took a bite out of his ice cream cone with a soft crunch. "Alright," Tubbo said, "You're right, it probably will be good for me. I guess."

“Yes!” Quackity sounded like a child who had just gotten exactly what they wanted for their birthday. “Alright, tell me all of the details.”

“I’m not telling you all the details.” Tubbo gave Quackity a half-hearted glare. “I’ll just tell you the sum of it all.”

Quackity nodded. “Fair enough, my man, fair enough.”

Tubbo felt like Quackity was feeling far too enthused for someone who was about to learn exactly how Tubbo exiled his best friend.

“Well, after Schlatt..., Wilbur made me president, and Tommy was my VP. And it worked out for the most part at first, but then Tommy decided to rob and burn George’s house down.”

Quackity whistled.

“Yep,” Tubbo agreed, “Basically, Dream got mad, said that he would build these huge walls around L’manberg if I didn’t either give him Tommy’s disc or exile Tommy himself. We tried to reason with him, but Tommy made things worse, and Dream demanded Tommy be exiled or else L’manberg will become a perpetual prison. So, I...”

“So, you exiled him,” Quackity finished.

Tubbo nodded.

Quackity hummed thoughtfully. “Not gonna lie man, it was a pretty terrible thing to do as a friend, but I’m not sure you had any other option when you’re in a position of power. I think the main problem with the situation is that it implies that you had no real control at all, and that Dream was calling most of the shots.”

Tubbo laughed humorlessly. “Nah, that was mostly you.”

“What?”

Tubbo flushed, forcing himself not to curl in on himself. “Nothing.”

Quackity looked like he wanted to argue, but he let out a loud sigh instead. “Yeah, I’ve probably pushed you enough today.” Quackity polished off his ice cream before glancing down at Tubbo’s. “You gonna finish that helado?”

Tubbo looked at his ice cream, which was dripping down the edges of his cone, making his hands uncomfortably sticky. He wasn’t sure if he felt hungry anymore.

“Probably not,” Tubbo said. He held his ice cream up to Quackity. “Do you want it?”

Quackity grimaced. “Nah, I think I’m good. Just throw it away over there.”

Tubbo stood up from the table and walked over to the rubbish bin. As he dropped the half-eaten ice cream into the bin, Tubbo wondered if this was what Tommy felt like.

Thrown away. Cast aside. Unwanted.

Tubbo felt like he had been hit by a mine-cart.

He had always known that exiling Tommy was the wrong thing to do as a friend, that he should've searched for some other alternative, but he had stood by the fact that there *was no other alternative*. It was Tommy or the nation, and as president, there was only one he could choose.

And Tubbo knew that was true. He *knew* that as president, he made the right decision.

But Tommy didn't care about that. Tommy probably knew as well as Tubbo that Tommy being exiled was the only alternative to the entire country being trapped. But that didn't matter to Tommy.

Because the simple fact of the matter was that Tommy had been thrown away by a friend, by *Tubbo*.

"I was still the one that did it, though, so I still need to take at least some responsibility."

And Tubbo had never apologized. Tubbo had never owned up to the fact that no matter how necessary it was, no matter how much Dream was the cause, *Tubbo* was still the one who exiled Tommy. Tubbo was still the one who made that impossible choice. Tubbo was the one who condemned Tommy to whatever torment Dream subjected him to in exile.

"Are you good there?"

Tubbo jumped, spinning around to see Quackity standing in front of him, looking concerned.

"Huh?" Tubbo asked.

"You were staring at the trash can kind of strangely," Quackity said, gesturing at the rubbish bin, "Are you alright? Did it insult you or something?"

"Oh, uh, no," Tubbo said, forcing himself to release the tension from his muscles, "I just realized something."

"Yeah?" Quackity said, "And what's that?"

Tubbo took a deep breath. "I need to apologize to Tommy."

Tommy's solitude was interrupted by a gentle knock on the door.

At first, Tommy didn't want to get up from his bed. Yelling at Schlatt had taken a lot out of him, and almost as soon as he stormed out of the room the second time, Tommy just wanted to sleep. Except he didn't want to sleep, because sleep meant nightmares. So, he just continued lying there, hoping that whoever had come by would just go away.

“Tommy?” Tubbo’s voice echoed slightly from behind the door, “Can I talk to you?”

Tommy rolled over so that he was actually facing the door, actually considering getting up and speaking to his friend.

But he was *so tired*. Besides, did Tommy even *want* to speak to Tubbo? Tommy wasn’t so sure. Tubbo had blamed *Tommy* for getting exiled, like it was *his* fault that Dream wanted control over everyone.

And that had hurt.

But, in a way, it was his fault. Maybe if Tommy hadn’t been so stupid, maybe if Tommy hadn’t been so brash, Tubbo might not have been forced to make the decision to exile Tommy in the first place.

That sounded like Dream talking.

But was Dream wrong?

“Tommy, can I talk to you?” Tubbo asked, “It’s important.”

Tommy practically jumped out of his bed when he heard a *bark* on the other side of his door. Why the heck would there be barking?

Pure curiosity was the only thing that got Tommy to pull himself out of bed and open the door.

Tubbo was standing in front of Tommy, wearing his normal green shirt, which was refreshing from the suit and tie that Tommy saw him in earlier that day. Standing next to Tubbo was a *dog*, a golden retriever from the looks of it.

“Why do you have a dog?” Tommy asked, staring at the happy-looking creature. Tommy wished he could find it within himself to be that happy.

“Well, um, she’s an apology present,” Tubbo stuttered.

Tommy’s head snapped toward Tubbo, who looked like he was about to cry. Had Tommy heard correctly?

“What?” Tommy asked, wondering if this was some strange dream.

Tubbo took a deep breath. “I’m, um, I’m here to apologize,” he said, his voice getting stronger as he spoke, “So here it goes: I’m sorry, Tommy.”

“Sorry for what?”

The answer was pretty obvious, but Tommy wanted to make sure he was hearing correctly. Besides, Tubbo had a point before; there wasn’t much Tubbo could’ve done. It was Tommy or Wilbur’s country.

“I’m sorry for exiling you,” Tubbo said. Tommy saw a tear roll down his cheek. “It may have been what was best for the nation, but it was a pretty horrible thing to do to you, especially since you were—are—my best friend, and I’m sorry. I don’t expect you to forgive me, but—”

“Tubbo,” Tommy interrupted, “Shut up.”

Tubbo flinched, and Tommy felt a stab of guilt.

“I just meant,” Tommy began, trying to find the words, “I just meant... you don’t have to keep apologizing, man. I suppose I owe you an apology as well.”

Tubbo blinked. Was he surprised? Tommy wasn’t sure why he would be. Sure, Tommy wasn’t one for apologies, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t give them when necessary.

Tommy took a deep breath, swallowing back his pride. “I’m sorry for... calling you all those horrible things before, and I’m sorry for forcing Dream’s hand.”

Tubbo shook his head. “You don’t have to apologize for that, I deserved—”

“You were just trying to lead Wilbur’s nation to the best of your ability,” Tommy interrupted, “You didn’t deserve me calling you a monster for it.”

Tubbo frowned. “Well, you at least don’t have to apologize for forcing Dream’s hand, he was practically looking for an excuse to exile you. *I’m* sorry for blaming you for that.”

Tommy sighed. “I’m sorry for accusing you of becoming the next Schlatt.”

“And I’m sorry for telling you not to become the next Wilbur.”

Tommy winced at the mention of his brother’s name, but he held out his hand for a shake.

Tubbo took it, and Tommy squeezed his hand, almost afraid of letting go.

“Listen, Tubbo,” Tommy swallowed, “Exile was really... rough for me, and I’m not sure how much of my resentment toward you was my own or planted by Dream, but I—” Tommy took a deep breath. “I think I can forgive you. If you can manage to forgive me, that is.”

Tubbo visibly sagged, squeezing Tommy’s hand almost hard as Tommy was squeezing Tubbo’s. “I’m not sure you ever did anything wrong, but I’ll forgive you anyway if it makes you feel better.”

Tommy nodded. “It does,” he said shortly, “Let’s shake on it.”

Their hands already firmly grasped together, they did a single shake, almost as if they were making a solemn business deal. A part of Tommy wanted to rush into Tubbo’s arms, to hug him and never let go. Another part of Tommy was afraid of what would happen if he did.

Tommy was the first to let go of Tubbo, and Tubbo was quick to follow suit. Once again, Tommy found himself glancing back down at the dog sitting obediently next to Tubbo. It was strange to think that there had been a witness to that entire affair, even if it was just a dog.

“So, what’s with the dog?” Tommy asked again, even though Tubbo had already provided an answer.

“She’s for you,” Tubbo explained, “I, uh, wanted to show you that I was truly sorry, so I went to this place where they train dogs for, uh, therapy and whatnot. She’s only six months old, and she hasn’t finished her training by a long shot, but I figured, ‘why not,’ you know?”

Tommy nodded staring at the dog in a new light. It sounded suspiciously like a pity gift, but considering that Tubbo had labeled the dog as an apology gift earlier, maybe it wasn’t. And besides, if Tubbo had gone all this way to give Tommy a dog, it would be pretty rude to simply refuse. Not to mention, she did look pretty soft.

Tommy wasn’t sure why Tubbo went the service dog route, though. Tommy wasn’t *traumatized*; he just had a few problems. That was true for everyone.

“What about you?” Tommy found himself asking.

Tubbo blinked. “Pardon?”

“Don’t you need a service, or therapy, or whatever dog too? If I need one, you definitely need one.”

Tubbo frowned, looking down at the golden retriever. “I guess I never thought about it.”

Tommy nodded understandingly. “It’s all that president crap, you’re too focused on others and not thinking about yourself, so I guess I’ll have to do it for you.”

Well, in all honesty, Tubbo had always had a hard time not worrying about others and forgetting himself in the process. That’s why Tommy was there to keep Tubbo on track.

Tubbo hesitated. “I don’t know, she was pretty expensive, and while Quackity said Schlatt wouldn’t mind, I’m not sure about another one—”

Tommy waved his hand like he was swatting a fly. “Schlatt’s filthy rich, he can afford it,” Tommy said, not bothering to hide a hint of bitterness from his tone, “Besides, he’s trying to make ‘amends’ right? He can bother to get you a dog that helps with the trauma that *he* caused.”

Tubbo winced. Tommy wasn’t sure why; it wasn’t like Tommy was wrong. Still, Tommy could tell the subject needed changing. Good thing Tommy was professional at that.

“Anyway,” Tommy said, crouching down to pet his new animal. He couldn’t help but to marvel at the softness of the fur, and he continued petting her just for her happy panting. “I need to name my new service animal. Any suggestions?”

Tubbo laughed, crouching down next to Tommy. “As if we don’t already know what her name is going to be.”

Tommy nodded solemnly. “You got that right.” He returned his attention to the dog. “You hear that, Clementine? You are my dog now, and it is your job to make me happy.”

Clementine barked. Tubbo laughed.

Somehow, Clementine ended up in both Tommy and Tubbo's laps, and then Tommy felt his eyes grow heavy, a natural consequence of forcing himself not to sleep the night before.

Damn, Tommy hated natural consequences.

The next thing Tommy knew, he heard shuffling. Immediately, Tommy snapped his eyes open, surprised to see that the room was dark. Night must have fallen at some point.

He returned his attention to the source of the shuffling, but it was gone. Nobody was there.

However, there was a box on the windowsill. And Tommy *knew* the box hadn't been there before, because this room was as bare as a skeleton's bones.

Carefully, Tommy shuffled out from under Clementine, trying not to wake Tubbo. Clementine blinked awake, but Tommy shushed her, and she seemed to get the idea.

"Tommy?" Tubbo asked groggily.

Damnit, Tommy must've shushed Clementine too loudly. The irony was not lost on him.

"It's nothing, go back to sleep," Tommy said quietly, trying to hide the tension in his tone.

Tubbo's eyes snapped open. "Tommy?" he asked again, his voice sounding much more serious, "What's wrong?"

Tommy rolled his eyes as he walked toward the windowsill. "It's nothing!" he said, wincing at his high-pitched voice crack, "Listen, this box just appeared out of nowhere, and it's kinda creepy. But I'm sure it's nothing important."

"Famous last words," Tubbo muttered, glancing at his communicator, "Can't you open it tomorrow? It's still the sixteenth."

"And that, my dear Tubbo, is how superstitions start," Tommy tutted, picking up the small rectangular box, "Nasty things, those superstitions."

"It's not superstitious if it's actually real," Tubbo muttered bitterly, "Name one good sixteenth we've had."

"Well, I'd argue that today wasn't *horrible*," Tommy said, opening the box, "Although, that may have something to do with the time-time..."

In the box, something that looked oddly like a finger was sitting on top of a pillow. There was a small note on top, but Tommy couldn't make it out in the dark.

"Tubbo, turn on the lights," Tommy said, willing his voice not to tremble.

Tubbo flicked the lights on. Tommy shrieked and dropped the box with a clatter.

The thing in the box didn't *look* like a finger. It *was* a finger.

"What's wrong?!" Tubbo exclaimed, clearly not having seen the contents of the box.

Tommy didn't answer. Ignoring the churning in his stomach, Tommy crouched down, trying not to look at the finger. With violently shaking hands, Tommy picked up the small sheet of paper.

I can't wait for us to have more fun together.

-Your only friend, Dream

Tommy gasped for breath, his vision zeroing in on the finger on the red cushion. Sharp fingernail. Pink tinted skin.

Techno.

Nausea boiled up to his throat; his head started pounding; buzzing filled his ears; and darkness closed in all around him.

Pain was an emotion Techno was very familiar with.

*PAIN ISN'T AN EMOTION. **WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT OF COURSE IT IS.** PAIN IS ALL I KNOW.*

Exhaustion was another emotion that Techno was very familiar with. Couldn't his Chat let him be in agony in peace?

*No. **Feel our pain.** He does feel our pain. **Feel it double.** Like Team Rocket, lol. **Prepare for trouble.** Make it double.*

"I'm gonna stop you right there," Techno said through his gag, leaning his head against the wall. Dream had found the decency to prop Techno up so that he was in a sitting position against the wall, which Techno appreciated. At least he can be miserable in dignity.

FINE. GUYS TAKE IT EASY HE JUST LOST A FINGER.

Techno glanced down at his bound hands, grimacing at the wrapped-up stump where his middle finger used to be. He still felt the pain in his no-longer-existing finger, and sometimes he could pretend that he still had access to all ten of his fingers.

Shame it wasn't true.

Dream, once again, had the decency to bandage the finger, much to the Chat's chagrin. Apparently, Techno's voices would rather have a bleeding stub than a terrible person wrap it up. Techno wasn't about to say that it didn't hurt his pride, but sometimes you just had to accept the help.

FOOL. WE JUST STOPPED OWING HIM AND NOW HE'S GONNA THINK WE OWE HIM AGAIN. WHY DO YOU MAKE ME SUFFER LIKE THIS.

Okay, so apparently Techno had owed Dream a favor in the last timeline. Good to know. Techno will file that away for later.

DREAM SAVED US FROM BEING EXECUTED BY TUBBO. IT WAS REALLY ANNOYING AFTER WE FOUND TOMMY. BECAUSE WE STILL OWED DREAM. BUT DREAM WAS A MUFFINHEAD. WHO ARE YOU, BAD BOY HALO?

Techno was just learning all kinds of new things today. For instance, apparently Tubbo tried to execute him. Very interesting. Now, Techno better understood why the voices basically wanted to kill the poor kid when he showed up to rescue Tommy.

The Chat shouldn't be so worried though. Techno didn't owe Dream anyway. Dream patched up his finger after Wilbur cut it off, so what? Human decency didn't mean that Techno owed Dream anything.

Well, then again, considering that Dream didn't typically possess any human decency, maybe Dream did expect Techno to owe him one.

AAAAAAH, HE RETURNS. QUICK KILL HIM WHILE HE LEAST EXPECTS IT. SMITE HIM WITH LIGHTNING. UNDERGROUND LIGHTNING.

Sure enough, the door opened, revealing the silhouette of Dream. Honestly, it was a bit of a relief. As much as Techno hated the man, at least *he* hadn't cut off Techno's finger.

Then again, he may have been the one to place the idea of the finger cutting into Wilbur's head, so it seemed that nobody had the moral high ground in this situation.

NOT TO MENTION HE TRAUMATIZED TOMMY. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

It was refreshing to know that his Chat could sometimes know sense.

Techno flipped Dream off with his left hand, which still had its middle finger. Dream let out a chuckle, clearly unbothered by Techno's silent insult.

"If you're good," Dream said, shutting the iron door behind him, "I might take that gag off."

OH, SHUT UP. YOU DON'T WANT TO RELEASE OUR POWER YOU SLIMY GREEN SLIME BOY.

Yeah, no. Technoblade wasn't a dog to be trained. And as tempting as the gift of speech was, it wasn't worth 'being good' or whatever Dream wanted to call it.

Techno rolled his eyes to get his point across.

Dream grinned and pulled something out of his inventory. Techno squinted at it and realized that it was a splash potion of some kind.

That was all the inspecting he was allowed to do before Dream chuckled it at Techno, loudly splattering the potion all over him.

IT BURNS IT BURNS. AAAH WHAT DID HE DO TO US. ACTUALLY, I THINK IT'S HEALING. I'M MELTING, I'M MELTING. GUYS WILL YOU LISTEN TO ME.

It was indeed a potion of regeneration, as it turned out. Techno had to admit that he appreciated the break from the constant pain all over, especially in his abdomen and missing finger.

Still... it seemed very out of character for Dream.

Techno raised his eyebrows questioningly.

"We're friends, aren't we?" Dream asked, "Can't friends help each other?"

WE ARE NOT FRIENDS. KILL HIM WITH HIS MASK. OH, THAT WOULD BE FUN.

Techno wasn't stupid. Dream definitely wanted something from Techno. The main question was what. Still, Techno might as well nip this 'friend' business in the bud. He liked cut and dry requests, not subtle manipulation.

Techno flipped Dream off with his stub of a middle finger, hoping that would get the point across.

Dream's smile didn't abate. "Wilbur was the one who did that to you, not me. Besides, wasn't I the one who bandaged that thing up for you?" Dream shrugged. "Not that I expect you to thank me or anything, anyone would do it."

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM AND HIS HONEYED WORDS. THE ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME SMELLS JUST AS SWEET. YEAH, LIKE SEWER WATER. LIKE SEWER WATER THAT WAS RAIDED BY RATS. GREEN RAT SEWER WATER.

Yeah, Dream was definitely acting suspicious. Maybe anyone else would patch up his finger, but not Dream. At least, not the same Dream who was definitely helping Wilbur's paranoia along and had at some point traumatized Tommy in the future.

Techno gestured to the blood stain left over from Dream stabbing him.

"You attacked me first, Techno," Dream sighed, like he was disappointed in a child.

NUH UH, NO WAY. IT'S MR. REVERED BLADE TO YOU. YOU DON'T GET TO CALL US ANYTHING OTHER THAN 'I'M VERY SORRY I WILL NEVER BOTHER YOU EVER AGAIN YOUR MAJESTY.'

Techno raised his eyebrows. Was Dream seriously going to try to pull this kind of nonsense? Because Techno wasn't going to fall for it. He wasn't a malleable child.

Dream held the silence for a few seconds before bursting out into laughter.

“I knew you wouldn’t fall for it,” he cackled, sounding far too gleeful for someone who just failed in manipulation, “I’m kind of glad, it might’ve been disappointing if you had.”

OH WELL I’M SORRY TO NOT DISAPPOINT. IS IT WRONG THAT I’M SAD WE DIDN’T DISAPPOINT HIM. WELL AT LEAST WE AREN’T HIS PAWN. I FEEL LIKE HE TRIED SOMETHING LIKE THIS ON TOMMY BEFORE.

Wait, *what*.

Dream continued on. “It doesn’t matter anyway; it’s not like I need you to actually like me to do what I want you to. I mean, I would try the favor card now, but something tells me that you won’t be as willing to buy into that.”

NO MORE FAVORS. WE OWE YOU NOTHING.

Dream was probably right. If Dream had rescued him from Wilbur, maybe Techno would feel that he owed him. But since Techno was still in this prison and very distinctly missing a finger as this monster tries to lure Techno’s *little brother* to him, Techno refused to do anything for Dream.

“But you know the way to control anyone?” Dream asked.

GASLIGHTING? MANIPULATION? EXILING TOMMY AND MAKING HIM TRAUMATIZED?

Techno shrugged. There wasn’t much he really could say in this incredibly one-sided conversation.

“Attachments,” Dream provided, his grin becoming more feral looking. He began walking closer to Techno. “And do you know what your attachment is?”

If Techno didn’t have this gag, he would’ve denied being attached to anything. Because Dream was right, attachments were horrible weaknesses, especially when people were prone to use Techno as a weapon.

BLOOD. KNIVES. TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN. CARL.

Dream crouched down, probably to be eye level with Techno. It’s a shame that the effect was somewhat dulled by the fact that Techno couldn’t actually look Dream in the eyes. Though, he did admit that the mask looked somewhat creepy. Maybe that was the effect Dream was going for.

Dream grabbed Techno by the shoulder in an iron grip and leaned closer to Techno’s ear.

DON’T TOUCH US. NO TOUCHY. WE NEED TO WASH OFF ALL TRACES OF GREEN SLIME MAN WHEN WE ARE FREE.

“*Tommy*, ” Dream whispered, like he was admitting some forbidden secret. Dream let go of Techno and backed away, much to Techno’s relief.

“Your weakness is Tommy,” Dream continued, sounding incredibly smug, “You let yourself get stabbed because of Tommy. You let yourself get captured for Tommy. You would do anything for your precious brother.”

CRAP. LET’S JUST KILL HIM NOW AND GET IT DONE WITH ALREADY. BITE HIM. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

Techno forced himself to keep his face impassive. If he didn’t show distress over Dream’s statement, maybe Dream would think that he missed the mark. Maybe Dream could have one less reason to hunt Tommy down.

Dream tilted his head like a curious cat.

“Nothing?” he asked, his voice taking on a mocking lilt, “Well, I’ll be the first to admit that the thought surprised me at first. I mean, the infamous Technoblade, developing a soft spot for that self-entitled brat, especially this early in the game? It did seem a little ridiculous.”

Early in the game? IS HE FROM THE FUTURE TOO? NO WAY. IF DREAM’S FROM THE FUTURE I’M GOING TO SUE.

Techno forced himself not to glare at Dream after that not-so-subtle insult in Tommy’s direction. He had to stay calm.

Dream pulled a small looking pocket knife out of his inventory, twirling the thing around his fingers. “So, I’m going to tell you what I’m going to do. When I get Tommy—and it’s *when* not *if*—I’m going to isolate him. I’m going to make him feel like everybody hates him, that nobody cares, and that I am his only friend.”

BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

Anger began boiling in Techno’s veins. Is that what Dream did to Tommy while he was in exile? Manipulate him? Gaslight him?

Dream seemed completely unbothered by Techno’s struggle to keep his emotions under control.

“I’ll do that all while blowing up his stuff, hurting him, and playing with him like an interesting little game until he looks at lava pools like they’re his old friend.”

OH MY GOD HE IS FROM THE FUTURE. OH NO. I’M SUING. OH CRAP, WE’RE SCREWED.

This time, Techno couldn’t hide the pure fury on his face. Because if it turned out that Dream *was* from the future, and that Dream had *already done* those despicable things to Tommy, then, well, there would be *hell to pay*.

BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD

Dream smirked. “Yeah, I thought so.”

Techno saw a flash of steel, and he became suddenly aware of fresh pain across his cheek. Hot blood began flowing down his face, getting some of the metallic tasting substance in his mouth.

Dream displayed his now bloody knife, dangling it tantalizingly with a smile. “That hurts, doesn’t it? You probably won’t admit it; you’re too strong for that, aren’t you?”

If it weren’t for this stupid mask, Techno would’ve spat some of the blood in his mouth straight onto Dream’s pristine mask. As it was, he couldn’t actually do that, so Techno settled for a simple glare.

Dream placed the tip of his knife on Techno’s jawline, still smiling. “But you know who isn’t strong?”

*DON’T YOU DARE. **DON’T TOUCH HIM YOU DISGUSTING MONSTER.** LEAVE TOMMY OUT OF THIS.*

Techno let out a guttural growl through his gag, surging forward, ignoring how the knife immediately broke skin. Dream slammed him back against the wall.

“And *when* I get Tommy back, you will listen to my every command,” Dream said, his voice becoming threatening, “Because if you don’t, I will give him ten of those cuts for every time you disobey.”

Dream stood up, flicking some blood at Techno. “Just, remember that.”

Techno wished that Dream would rip off his gag, so that Techno could give him a piece of his mind, so that Techno could spit out every threat he had, so that Techno could swear that he would rip Dream apart limb by limb and then cut up those limbs and then bury each of those pieces in such obscure parts that nobody would recover every piece of his pathetic body.

YES. LET’S DO THAT. SO VIOLENT, I LOVE IT. NOBODY WILL EVER FIND THE CULPRIT. NOBODY WOULD EVER FIND DREAM. MUAHAHAHAHHA. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

But Dream never took off Techno’s gag, so Techno was left shouting through his gag as Dream opened and shut the door behind him with a damning bang.

Phil continued flying toward Manberg, holding his ringing communicator up to his ear.

Pick up, pick up, pick up.

The ringing stopped, and Phil held his breath when he didn’t hear the usual automated voice message.

Silence. Then,

“Phil?”

Wilbur's voice was unsure and unstable, but that didn't stop Phil from letting out a sigh of relief.

"Hey Wilbur."

Chapter End Notes

Listen, I didn't mean for it to go like this. But a commenter asked me specifically not to do the finger sending thing, and I cackled because it was such a good idea.

This chapter was way longer than I expected.

Tommy forgave Tubbo in canon pretty quickly all things considered, so I feel like after Tubbo properly apologizes, Tommy's fairly willing to forgive *Tubbo*. Schlatt still has to work for it.

Clementine got two votes when I asked for name suggestions in my Tumblr, so Clementine it is.

If you squint, you can see the very beginning of Wilbur's redemption arc. Congratulations those of you who have been ~~impatiently~~ so very patiently waiting for this moment. Let me remind you guys that this redemption arc is going to be slow and messy business, but I hope to do it justice.

By the way, the techno scene probably happened on the fourteenth-ish. The timelines aren't perfectly aligned yet. Phil, Tommy, and Tubbo are all operating on the sixteenth though.

Anyway, thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

BREAK TIME. get a glass of water. Please.

Just Another Game of Telephone

Chapter Summary

Quackity is mad. Important phone calls are made. Dream makes an offer. Wilbur refuses one.

Chapter Notes

Tw: manipulation, child abuse, panic attacks, amputated finger, abandonment issues

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After Schlatt explained everything to Quackity, there was this long, drawn-out silence.

“Oh my god,” Quackity breathed out, looking unsure of himself and what he was supposed to say, “You killed Tubbo?”

Schlatt decided not to correct him with the technicality that it was Techno who pulled the trigger. It didn’t change the fact that Schlatt was the one who gave the order. Schlatt was the one who publicly humiliated and executed Tubbo.

“Yep,” Schlatt said, popping the ‘p.’ He massaged the bridge of his nose, trying to repress the incoming headache he saw coming on. “Pretty disgusting, huh?”

“Yeah, ‘pretty disgusting’ might be an understatement.” Quackity’s voice grew bolder. “What the hell were you thinking? Tubbo’s a kid!”

“I wasn’t thinking clearly. I was drunk.” Schlatt sighed. “Well, that’s a really pathetic excuse, considering that the festival was basically a glorified execution.”

“Well then, tell me the truth.” Quackity glowered at Schlatt.

“I was angry,” Schlatt said slowly, “I think I was scared that Tubbo was going to be my undoing. But really, I was just being terrible, there’s no other way around it.”

“God, Schlatt,” Quackity seethed, “I knew you were going bad, but that...killing a kid? Seriously?”

Schlatt laughed humorlessly. “There’s a reason I wanted Tubbo to punch me,” he said, “Do you need one too? You kinda look like you want to, and it’s not like I don’t deserve it.”

Quackity opened and closed his fist repeatedly, like he couldn't decide what he wanted to do.

"Also," Schlatt said, suddenly remembering something, "I'm sorry. For everything, but more specifically the abuse that I put you through during my time here."

Quackity scowled and the floor. "It wasn't that bad," he muttered, "Better than child murder, at any rate."

Schlatt winced, but it wasn't like Quackity didn't have a point. Killing Tubbo *was* a screwed-up thing to do. It was definitely something that would scar Tubbo for the rest of his life, even if the actual burn scars were erased.

In all honesty, Schlatt was kind of relieved that Quackity wasn't letting this go. Seeing Tubbo's insistence upon politeness only really made Schlatt feel worse about his past actions. It was just a constant reminder of what a *good kid* Tubbo was and how Schlatt had tried to snuff that out.

Schlatt opened his mouth, ready to apologize some more, when the door slammed open revealing Tommy, who was actually *crying* and shaking like he had seen Dream himself.

Oh crap. Tommy *never* let people see him like this unless it was *really* bad.

Tubbo followed close behind Tommy, as well as a dog. It must be the one that Quackity mentioned Tubbo buying for Tommy.

Tommy stormed across the room, slamming a small, rectangular box against the desk.

"Wha—" Quackity began, but Tommy interrupted him.

"Just open it," he commanded, his voice a mix of anger and trepidation, "Just open the damn thing."

Dread coiling his stomach, Schlatt started opening the box; Quackity hovered over his shoulder.

When they saw what was inside, they both swore at the top of their lungs so loudly that the entire White House probably heard.

It was a finger. It was a *freaking* finger. It was a finger sitting on a small red cushion. A strong stench of fabric freshener filled the air, and Schlatt didn't doubt for a minute that it was trying mask the scent of rotting skin.

And Schlatt had a sneaking suspicion he knew who the finger belonged to.

Nausea stirred in his stomach, and Schlatt quickly closed the box, not wanting to look at its contents anymore.

"Did it come with a note?" he asked.

Tommy and Tubbo were still shaking, but Schlatt needed to get a handle on the situation as quickly as possible.

“Ye—”

“No.”

Tubbo was the first to speak, but he was quickly interrupted by Tommy, who was wearing a scowl fierce enough to scare monsters away.

“There was, though!” Tubbo protested, giving Tommy a look, “You picked it up, I remember!”

“You remembered wrong,” Tommy said, his voice closing off.

“Tommy.” Schlatt sighed. “If there was a note, we need to see it. It might help us figure out where Technoblade is.”

“He’s in Pogtopia,” Tommy snapped, “Everybody knows that, idiot.”

“Actually, he’s not,” Quackity said, his own voice tense, “We already scouted out Pogtopia, it’s been completely abandoned. It looks like they were smart enough to hide somewhere new.”

Tommy froze, his mouth slightly agape. His eyes darted between Schlatt, Quackity, and Tubbo so quickly that Schlatt was almost worried that the kid was going to make himself dizzy.

“What-when-why didn’t anyone tell me?” Tommy stuttered, giving everyone a slightly betrayed looking look.

“I thought Fundy told you,” Tubbo said, looking almost as surprised as Tommy did, “I had already visited that day, and we wanted you to know as soon as possible.”

Tommy frowned, clutching his head. “He might’ve, I don’t remember.”

“Maybe he forgot?” Tubbo suggested.

“I might’ve been asleep,” Tommy admitted.

“Crappy timing for a nap,” Quackity muttered.

Tommy glowered at Quackity. “Well, how was I supposed to know that Fundy was going to deliver critical news to me that day? It’s not like I have this magical ability to know when I’m not supposed to nap. And you know what, I’m allowed to nap whenever I want, jerk, so leave me alone!”

Quackity blinked before raising his arms in surrender. “Okay, okay. Forget I said anything.”

“Back to the subject at hand,” Schlatt said, looking a seething Tommy in the eyes, “Do you have a note? Because if there’s anything—”

“There isn’t,” Tommy interrupted shortly, “Anything. It was just a stupid note; there was no information on it at all.”

Damn. Still, there might be something that Tommy didn’t notice on first glance.

“Can I see it?” Schlatt asked.

Tommy glanced down before glaring back at Schlatt.

“No.” His voice was shaking, but Schlatt knew that Tommy wasn’t easily going to give into this request.

Schlatt needed a drink.

Schlatt got ready to begin begging for Tommy to give him something to work with, but he was interrupted by sudden ringing.

Tubbo quickly pulled his communicator out of his pocket, fumbling with the small device for a moment. He then froze, staring at the screen. What was wrong?

“Tubbo?” Tommy whispered.

Tubbo’s hands began shaking. “It’s Dream.”

His voice came out as a thin whisper, and Schlatt almost didn’t hear it. But he did, and Schlatt immediately got to his feet, causing his chair to clatter loudly behind him.

Tubbo flinched and automatically took a step back. Schlatt felt a pang of guilt, but there was no time to dwell on it now.

“Give it to me,” Schlatt said, unable to keep the urgency out of his voice.

He needed to speak to Dream. He needed to figure out where Technoblade was. He needed to make it clear that Dream was not to hurt anyone else ever again.

Tubbo slowly dropped the communicator into Schlatt’s hand, and Schlatt quickly accepted the call.

“Hello Tubbo,” Dream said sweetly, his voice slightly robotic over the phone.

“Wrong,” Schlatt snarled, “Guess again.”

“Schlatt.”

Schlatt didn’t know what to make of Dream’s tone of voice. Was it terse? Masked? Unsurprised?

It didn’t matter.

“Where the hell are you?” Schlatt demanded, leaning against his desk for support.

“Wow, somebody’s angry,” Dream said, “But I suppose that’s on par for the course for you, isn’t it Schlatt?”

Schlatt refused to rise to the bait.

“I’m going to ask you this once and only once,” Schlatt growled, “*Where. The. Hell. Is. Technoblade?*”

“Why do you want to know so badly?” Dream asked, “I wasn’t aware you cared. I thought your great nation was the only thing you cared about.”

Schlatt could hear gasped breaths. His eyes followed the sound to see Tubbo hunching in on himself, looking at Schlatt with raw fear. Guilt flooded through Schlatt, because *he had done this, he had made Tubbo this afraid of him.*

But now wasn’t the time to drown in his guilt. Schlatt made eye contact with Quackity and gestured to the door.

“*Get him out,*” he mouthed.

Quackity nodded, gently leading Tubbo out of the room. Tommy stayed where he was, though he whispered to his dog to follow.

“Did I hit a nerve?” Dream taunted, clearly taking Schlatt’s silence as shocked guilt instead of Tubbo having a panic attack.

“You wish,” Schlatt said, gesturing at Tommy and trying to convey the idea of *leave the room.*

Tommy only scowled and stood stubbornly there, even though he was trembling so much that Schlatt was afraid he was going to collapse any minute now.

“Okay, whatever you say,” Dream said, definitely drawing out the doubt in his voice, “Anyway, I’ll tell you where you can find Techno.”

Yeah, like it’s that easy.

“Uh-huh, I definitely believe that,” Schlatt said, layering on his own sarcasm.

“No, really,” Dream said, “If you let me talk to Tommy, I’ll tell him exactly where he can find Techno.”

Dream, you slimy monster. Of course, Dream was going to only tell Tommy, and Tommy would accept because he wanted to save his brother. And then Dream would start manipulating Tommy again, start worming his way into his head until Tommy believed every word, and then Dream would start paving his pathway to victory.

It was evil. It sounded like something the old Schlatt might’ve attempted if he had the wits.

“No way in hell,” Schlatt snarled, “I’m not letting you speak to him ever again.”

“Didn’t you exile him?” Dream asked, “I’m not sure you’re allowed to make choices for him, Schlatt. So, why don’t you ask Tommy what he wants?”

Damnit, Dream knew exactly what buttons to press to make Schlatt feel that overwhelming burden of guilt. Because Dream was right, Schlatt *had* exiled Tommy, and he really *didn’t* have the right to make choices for him.

But this was different, because putting Tommy in a vulnerable situation with his abuser was cruel, and Schlatt wasn’t about to allow it.

“You are not speaking with him,” Schlatt said firmly. He glanced up at Tommy, who still looked as if he couldn’t decide if he wanted to look angry or terrified. Dream would do nothing to improve his mental health. “It doesn’t matter what he wants. Talking to you is the last thing he *needs*.”

“Who does Dream want to talk to?” Tommy demanded, “Does he want to speak with me?”

“Give Tommy the phone or Techno’s losing another finger,” Dream said, his voice suddenly dangerous, “I won’t hesitate; he’ll still have eight to spare.”

Schlatt froze, now staring at Tommy. If he refused, Tommy would never forgive him for causing Techno to lose another limb, but if Schlatt put Tommy in a one-on-one conversation with his abuser, then Tommy would be trapped in his own right.

But the idea of Tommy getting sent another finger wasn’t much better.

“He does want to speak to me, doesn’t he?” Tommy’s voice wavered before hardening. “Well, give me the damn communicator then.”

“You have five seconds,” Dream said in a bored tone, “Five, four, three—”

There was really no other option.

“Fine,” Schlatt bit out.

Schlatt needed *two* drinks.

He hated himself as he handed the phone to Tommy. Tommy’s hands were shaking, no matter how hard the kid was probably trying to hide it.

Tommy lifted the phone up to his ear, and Schlatt was almost proud to hear the raw anger in the kid’s voice when he spoke.

“Hello, Dream.”

“Hello, Tommy,” Dream said, “It’s been a long time, hasn’t it?”

Tommy tightened his fist so tightly that he felt his nails dig into his palms. They were probably drawing blood at this point, but Tommy didn't care.

"Where's Techno?" Tommy demanded.

"That's a rude way to address your friend," Dream said, sounding disappointed, "I thought I taught you better than that."

Tommy began to curl into himself, because *he had disappointed Dream and that was bad and Dream could hurt him*—but then he saw Schlatt still leaning forward against his desk, watching Tommy like a hawk.

Tommy wasn't going to let that ram see him in a moment of weakness. No way. Not going to happen.

Tommy straightened, forcing his voice to stay bold.

"You're not my friend," Tommy said firmly, "You just want to control me, and it's not going to work."

"That's a very ungrateful thing for you to say, Toms," Dream said. A threatening undertone laced his voice. "Especially after that gift I sent you?"

"Shut up," Tommy snapped, forcing down the panic that was threatening to take over, trying not to think about Techno's finger in that box, "Where is Techno?"

Dream hummed, and Tommy repressed a shudder. "I'll tell you if you apologize."

Tommy scowled. "Apologize for what, damnit—"

"Apologize for being an ungrateful brat," Dream interrupted, "Nobody wants you, Tommy; you shouldn't push the only person who cares away."

"Tubbo cares—" Tommy began.

"Like Wilbur does?" Dream asked sharply.

Tommy took a step back, even though Dream wasn't anywhere in the room. His ears started buzzing.

"Wilbur cares about me," Tommy whispered, "More than you do, you sick—"

"If Wilbur cares about you, why does he hurt you?" Dream asked, "Why do you get nightmares about him? Why is he hurting his other brother?"

"That's you," Tommy said, forcing his voice to grow stronger, "That's *you* placing ideas into his *head*!"

"Okay, that's enough." Schlatt was walking toward Tommy. His hand was outstretched, probably for Tommy to give him the phone.

Tommy stepped away. This call wasn't over; Tommy still didn't know where Techno was. Tommy needed to learn where Techno was. It was Tommy's own fault that Techno didn't *have a finger* anymore, and Tommy needed to make it right. He needed to save him.

"You're being ridiculous," Dream said, like it was a regular occurrence, "This is why you need me to keep you in check. Now, apologize, and I'll tell you where Techno is."

Tommy opened and closed his mouth like a fish above water. He didn't want to apologize to Dream. Dream didn't deserve his apology. *But he needed to, he insulted him, and Dream was his only friend, and Tommy should be grateful Dream's willing to tell him at all, and—*

Tubbo burst through the doors, looking panicked. Quackity and Clementine followed, and Clementine immediately ran up to Tommy and nudged his leg with her head.

"What are you doing?" Tubbo demanded. He spun over to Schlatt. "Why did you let him—"

"He didn't leave me with much of a choice," Schlatt said bitterly, "And now Tommy won't let me take the thing back."

Tommy flipped Schlatt off. He needed to figure out where Techno was.

"Tommy, I'm waiting," Dream said, impatience bleeding into his voice.

Tommy flinched. "Fine, I'm sorry."

"For?"

Tommy scowled, and heat rushed up to his face. He couldn't believe he was doing this in front of Schlatt and Tubbo. *He deserved it.*

"I'm sorry for being ungrateful," Tommy said slowly, "It was wrong of me. You're only trying to be a good friend."

Tubbo looked horrified. Tommy looked down at the floor.

"Good boy," Dream purred, and Tommy hated the small part of himself that actually felt warm at the praise. "Now, next week, I'm going to send Tubbo a time and coordinates. You and Tubbo are to come *unarmed* and *alone*. If you don't, I'm cutting Techno's legs off."

Cold shock shuddered through Tommy's body. "You wouldn't."

"Wouldn't I?"

Tommy hated the smugness in Dream's tone.

"Fine," Tommy whispered.

"I'll see you then."

The call ended. Tommy allowed his hand to fall to his side, and Tubbo's communicator slipped from his grasp and clattered to the floor.

"Tommy!" Tubbo exclaimed, rushing up to him. Tommy immediately took a step back.

"I'm fine, Tubbo," he said, reaching down to pet Clementine's soft fur, "He said he'll send the coordinates next week. He said that me and Tubbo have to come alone. Unarmed."

Schlatt's face darkened. "No way," he said, "Absolutely not."

"He's going to cut Techno's legs off if we don't," Tommy said coldly, "There's not much of a choice."

"No, there is," Quackity said, "We can drink invisibility potions, get the jump on them while they're distracted by you two. We rescue Techno, capture Wilbur, kill Dream. Everybody wins."

Tommy let out a bitter laugh. "There's no way Dream's on his last life. He would only come back."

"With what army?" Schlatt asked, "At the end of the day, Dream's just a man. If he tries to go up against all of us, he's going to lose."

Tubbo picked his communicator up from the ground, shoving it back into his pocket. "We've got this, Tommy."

Tommy didn't smile, but he did manage a nod. "Okay," he said, "Yeah, that might work."

"And Phil's on his way," Tubbo added, "I'm sure he'll be a great help."

"He'd better be," Schlatt muttered.

"Phil, what-what are you—why are you calling me?" Wilbur asked.

Phil watched the landscape zoom beneath him as he clung onto his communicator.

"Why wouldn't I call you?" Phil asked, making sure to keep his voice gentle, "You're my son, Wilbur. I want to check in on you."

Phil winced when Wilbur's voice took a turn to the worse. "You haven't called this entire time," he snarled, "Why are you calling me now?"

Phil sighed. "Listen, Tommy call—"

"Tommy?" Wilbur's voice now bordered on desperate. "You talked to Tommy? Where is he?"

Phil chose his words carefully. According to Tommy, Wilbur wasn't quite in his right mind, and it wouldn't do for Phil to accidentally trigger Wilbur's paranoia. Wilbur needed help, but Phil couldn't do that if Wilbur pushed him away.

"He's safe," Phil said, deciding it would be a horrible idea to say that he was in the country Wilbur was planning on blowing up, "He's safe, but I'm worried about you, Wilbur."

"If he's safe, why don't you tell me where he is?" Wilbur snarled, "You're with them, aren't you? You're with Schlatt! You have Tommy captured, you can't do that, he's mine, you can't —"

Oh god, this was way worse than Tommy made it out to be.

"Wilbur," Phil said firmly, interrupting his son's spiral, "Tommy is not captured. He's being well taken care of. He called me because he wants you to get help."

"Don't lie to me," Wilbur growled, "You never wanted to help me before, it was always about Techno, your *prodigy*. And then you never call while I'm away, and now you're keeping Tommy away from me. You don't want to help me, you're trying to ensnare me in a trap, you're trying to kill me—"

"No," Phil said firmly, trying to hide his rising horror, "I'm not trying to kill you, and I *do* want to help you, Wil. I'm sorry if you felt that I was prioritizing Techno over you, I never meant to make you feel that way, but—"

"Shut up, shut up!" Wilbur shouted, "Stop *lying*! You never loved me, stop pretending to now!"

"I'm not lying," Phil said, "I love you. I love you so much."

There was a loud beep. Wilbur had hung up on him.

Phil felt horror threaten to overflow. Wilbur really hated him that much? Wilbur really thought that Phil didn't love him?

Almost instantly, images of Wilbur's childhood flashed across Phil's mind. Kristin bringing a four-year-old Wilbur home; Wilbur playing with Techno in the backyard; Wilbur giving Phil a big hug every morning; Wilbur cuddling with Tommy; Wilbur leaving with Tommy.

When had things gotten so bad? Had Phil really payed more attention to Techno than to Wilbur? He would be the first to admit that he had spent a lot of time training Techno, but that didn't mean he loved Techno more.

Phil immediately pressed Wilbur's contact again, ready to rectify his failure as a father.

Please pick up, please pick up, please pick up.

No response.

Phil continued to try calling Wilbur for the rest of his journey, but Wilbur never answered.

Chapter End Notes

I have a [discord](#) now. Please check it out. I want friends. I want people to scream at me about my fics. Also, you get the chapter notification sooner on discord. Ao3 emails take longer.

Anyway, back to real notes:

Schlatt tried to handle the situation as best as he could, but if you think he made an error in judgement, remember he's not perfect.

Tommy is very traumatized, and Dream is enjoying himself way too much.

Wilbur is not about to accept any help. As a matter of fact, Wilbur is going to actively oppose his redemption arc all the way. Sorry not sorry.

We'll be seeing Techno in the next chapter, so that'll give you guys something to look forward to.

I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading! <3

Dad vs. Dad

Chapter Summary

Dadschlatt vs Dadza, who will win.

Chapter Notes

TW: manipulation, implied/referenced child abuse, implied/referenced death, some mild torture

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Something had really ticked off Wilbur recently.

Techno knew this because he could hear Wilbur's shouting and things being shattered against the wall. Techno also knew this because Wilbur had stormed in and beat Techno bloody.

"First you," Wilbur had gasped, slamming his fist into Techno's still bleeding cheek, "And now Phil! Damnit, stop lying to me!"

*Phil? **PHIL, PHIL, PHIL, PHIL. PHIL NYE THE SCIENCE GUY. I FEEL LIKE WE ARE IGNORING THE FACT THAT SPARKY IS TRYING TO BEAT US INTO THE GROUND. PHIL, PHIL, PHIL, PHIL, PHIL***

Had Techno ever mentioned how much of a headache Chat gave him? Because if not, know that it was a critical part of his existence.

Still, Wilbur's absurd amount of anger over Phil raised some questions in Techno's mind. Namely, what had Phil done to get Wilbur so mad?

*Called, I bet. **Showed up? VISITED HIM IN A DREAM. VISITED DREAM. DIED, BECAME A GHOST, AND STARTED HAUNTING HIM. GUYS WHAT IF WE ARE REALLY ALL DEAD AND THIS IS OUR OWN PERSONAL HELL***

This is why Chat should never be allowed to theorize.

Though, if Techno were going to go with one of their guesses, the first two were definitely the most likely. The first was probably the likeliest, though. Phil probably gave Wilbur a call, probably saying, "hey, what's up with you son?", and Wilbur probably lost it.

Still, Techno would appreciate it if Wilbur could take his anger out on a punching bag instead of slamming Techno into the ground like he was some sort of training dummy.

*THIS IS DIVINE RETRIBUTION FOR THE PIT. **SOMEHOW, I DOUBT THAT. YOU'D THINKING STABBING WOULD BE ENOUGH PENANCE, BUT NOOOO***

Notch, Techno hoped that he hadn't done anything close to this much damage to Tommy in the past timeline. If so, Techno was frankly surprised Tommy was even willing to look at him.

*Well, you forget that we protected him from the green Tellytubby. **WE PROBABLY SHOULD'VE THROWN HIM OUTSIDE. YEAH, HE WAS STEALING OUR STUFF. HE WAS SAD AND SCARED CUT HIM SOME SLACK. WE DO NOT CUT THEIVES SLACK. THE FUTURE SAYS OTHERWISE.***

"You betrayed me," Wilbur was continuing, "Phil never loved me, you never loved me, you betrayed me, Tommy's captured, Phil's in on it, and he's pretending he loves me so that he can trap me, and..."

*THE DADDY ISSUES STRIKE AGAIN. **WOULDN'T IT BE NICE IF HE WOULD JUST LISTEN TO SOMEONE? DUDE, HE'S LIKE TECHNO WHEN THIS BEGAN. WOULDN'T BELIEVE A WORD OUT OF OUR MOUTHS. DO WE EVEN HAVE MOUTHS?***

Chat, Techno was trying to listen to Wilbur's rant. Maybe then, he could figure out a way to calm his brother. Or, at least, calm his brother as soon as this stupid gag was removed from his mouth, which only ever happened when Dream fed him.

Those times were always fun.

The day after Dream and Techno had that *lovely* one-sided conversation, Dream brought Techno food, which consisted of two potatoes.

Techno was starving, though, so even two potatoes seemed like a god-send.

Still, Techno was faced with a bit of a dilemma.

On one hand, Techno was ravenous, and would really like to eat some food. It would at least get rid of the constant aching in his stomach, which is one less thing, if you asked him.

On the other hand, getting food meant cooperating with *Dream*, the man who wanted to torment, abuse, and manipulate his little brother, so you had to forgive Techno if he said he wasn't exactly thrilled with the prospect of playing nice with him.

*STARVE. **POG THROUGH THE PAIN. NO PLAYING NICE. PRETEND TO PLAY NICE AND THEN BITE HIM. I'M HUNGRY I WANT FOOD***

Techno decided that he wouldn't be much help to anyone if he was half-dead from starvation, so he decided that he would 'behave' long enough to get the food and water into his system.

Dream was ever the charmer as he walked into the room.

“Hello, Techno,” he said, sitting down next to Techno with the plate of potatoes in his hands, “I hope you’ve been giving what I told you earlier some thought?”

Techno settled for a hard glare.

WE DO NOT SPARE THOUGHTS FOR YOU. Are you kidding? All we ever do is brood about him. WE DO NOT SPARE POSITIVE THOUGHTS FOR YOU. That’s not what he asked.

Dream’s smile didn’t fade. “Well, you’ve clearly cooled down a little bit,” he said, “Which is good, because it means I can give you this.”

Dream gestured to the plate of potatoes with one hand, holding the plate with the other.

Techno was already regretting his decision to play nice. Dream was acting way to smug for a man who threatened a sixteen-year-old child the day prior.

Still, Techno forced himself not to bite Dream as Dream took the gag out of Techno’s mouth.

BITE HIM YOU COWARD. FREEDOM. BITE, BITE, BITE

The Chat seemed to have forgotten that Techno was trying to get food into his system so he didn’t become a useless pile of bones. In order to do that, Techno kind of needed to cooperate with Dream for the time being. Cooperation meant no biting.

WE DON’T NEED FOOD. YEAH, I EAT FEAR FOR BREAKFAST.

That was all very well and good, but Techno did need actual sustenance. Besides, the Chat shouldn’t worry so much; he had the situation under control. Not to mention that Techno was ninety-percent certain that Dream had given up the whole manipulation thing, based on the way he acted yesterday.

Still, it wouldn’t hurt to have his guard up.

Holding the gag, Dream tilted his head, and Techno imagined him raising his eyebrows underneath the mask.

“No insults?” he asked, smiling, “Seems like you’ve given what I’ve said to more thought than you made out.”

Techno scowled again. “You disgust me,” he said, unable to help himself. His voice was hoarse and barely audible, but Techno was glad to hear that he still managed to infuse all of the unadulterated hatred he felt into his voice.

You can do better than that. HONESTLY, WE HAVE SO MANY BETTER INSULTS IN OUR ARMADA. WE’LL START WITH GREEN TELLYTUBBY.

Dream snorted. “If we’re going to talk about disgusting, you’re not one to talk,” he said, “You’re absolutely filthy. When’s the last time you showered?”

Around anyone else, Techno might’ve rolled his eyes. Instead, he gave Dream the most furious glare he could muster, which, coincidentally enough, could strike fear into the strongest of men.

“You know what I meant,” he growled, the hoarseness of his voice actually adding to the effect. Any sane man would be running for the hills by now.

Turned out that Dream wasn’t any sane man, because he didn’t even frown. As a matter of fact, he simply continued on with his pleasant tone.

“Well, if we’re going to say it in that sense, you’re still not really one to talk,” Dream said, “But that’s neither here nor there. Do you want your food or not?” Dream held up one of the potatoes.

Techno didn’t let his glare abate, but he did let out a frustrated breath.

“Fine,” he snapped, “Give me the food.”

*WE STARVE. **FOR BLOOD.** DREAM’S BLOOD. **LET’S BITE HIM.***

“Nuh, uh, uh,” Dream said, “What’s the magic word?”

Techno raised his eyebrows. “We’re seriously doing this?”

I DENY POLITENESS. NO WAY.

Dream’s smile grew wider. “C’mon, it’s not that hard.”

Techno still didn’t believe what he was hearing. “Seriously?”

Dream began tossing the potato up and down in the air. “Listen, I don’t have to give you this. Just say it and be done with it already.”

*TECHNO DON’T YOU DARE. **PRESERVE YOUR DIGNITY.** WE DON’T NEED FOOD ANYWAY. **SMACK HIM IN THE FACE.***

Techno gritted his teeth. If looks could kill, he’d probably have killed an entire army at this point. “*Please*, give me the damn potato.”

Dream snorted and tossed the potato to Techno, who caught it. Just because his wrists were tied up, didn’t mean he couldn’t catch things, which was good; he might’ve been forced to eat a dirty potato otherwise.

*I can’t believe you’ve done this. **At least he caught the potato.** I am disappointed. Feel my disappointment. **THROW THE POTATO AT HIM.***

Making sure to glare at Dream the entire time, Techno ate the potato, being sure to make each bite as violent and threatening as possible.

Dream didn't give him the second potato that day. Techno just found himself glad he wasn't forced to use his manners again.

Now, Wilbur was still beating him like a someone who really needed someone to talk to but only knew how to do that by punching something.

"I hate you," Wilbur snarled, picking Techno up by the scuff of his now incredibly stained and dirty shirt, "I hate you so much."

Techno raised his eyebrows in a "what do you want me to do about it" sort of way, and Wilbur snarled.

Techno braced himself for another punch, but they were rudely interrupted by the unexpected sound of a communicator ringing.

Wilbur dropped Techno to the ground, causing him to land in an unattractive heap.

TECHNOFALL. LIKE A BAG OF POTATOS. THE PHONE, THE PHONE IS RINGING. THE PHONE, WE'LL BE RIGHT THERE. THERE'S A TECHNOBLADE IN TROUBLE. THERE'S A TECHNOBLADE IN TROUBLE. THERE'S A TECHNOBLADE IN TROUBLE SOMEWHERE.

Techno really wished that the Chat would stop doing random musical numbers. It was both annoying and out-of-tune.

Wilbur, meanwhile, was swearing profusely, digging his communicator out of one of the pockets in his trench coat.

Techno watched as Wilbur stared at the caller ID, sagged very visibly, and accepted the call with a crazed grin.

"Hello, Schlatt," he said, "Did you like my gift?"

Wilbur's face suddenly darkened, and he ended the call almost instantly. With a sudden scream, threw the communicator against the wall. It was a good thing that communicators were made of sturdy stuff, or it would have probably shattered into a million pieces.

WHAT'S UP WITH HIM. SCHLATT MUST'VE SAID SOMETHING RUDE. RUDE ENOUGH FOR HIM TO THROW A TEMPER TANTRUM LIKE A MAN CHILD?

Wilbur was running his hands through his hair, muttering to himself.

"It's just a trap, he wants to keep Tommy away from you, he's mocking you, he's mocking your weakness, he wants to flaunt his victory, but, but..." A twisted grin grew on Wilbur's face. "I can use this to my advantage."

Is anyone else confused? I feel like Technoblade right now.

Techno watched as Wilbur straightened, calmly walked across the room, and picked up his communicator. Wilbur dusted it off and put it back into his pocket. Still grinning, he left the room.

WELL, THAT WASN'T OMINIOUS AT ALL. NOPE, THAT WAS COMPLETELY NORMAL. TO BE HONEST, THIS IS PRETTY NORMAL BEHAVIOR FOR WILBUR.

Dream entered the room soon after Wilbur left, treating all of Techno's wounds and splashing regen all over him. Techno made sure to glare at Dream the entire time.

Schlatt sent everyone to bed after those highly stressful conversations. Tommy looked like he was ready to pull an all-nighter, but Tubbo managed to convince him to go to bed, much to Schlatt's relief. God knows that kid needed sleep. Anyone with eyes could see those purple eye-bags from a mile away.

Now, Schlatt was contemplating how wonderful a drink would be right about now, as well as how on earth they were going to launch an *ambush* on Dream when he always seemed to be a step ahead of them.

Schlatt's musings were interrupted by the doors to his office slamming open loudly, adding a fresh wave of pain to a headache he had acquired earlier. Half-expecting it to be Tommy again, Schlatt glanced up tiredly.

Philza Minecraft strode into the room, his wings fully spread out in all of their glory. His face was burning with fury, and he truly looked like the Angel of Death, ascending from hell to bring retribution for all of Schlatt's crimes.

Schlatt instinctively leaned back in his seat, because man, Philza did not have his reputation for no reason.

Philza slammed his hands against the table, glaring down at Schlatt. Looks might not kill, but Schlatt was seriously concerned that he might have another heart attack anyway.

"What. Have. You. Done. To. My. Sons?" Philza growled.

Schlatt should've expected this. But, for some reason, he hadn't expected it at all. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that Phil had seen Tommy in exile and had done nothing about it. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that Phil actively put a sword through Wilbur's chest.

Schlatt forced himself to regain some composure. Straightening in his seat, he looked Philza straight in the eyes when he spoke.

"I exiled Wilbur and Tommy," he said, "and believe me when I tell you that it was one of the worst mistakes of my life."

Mistake was a pretty term for sin. Schlatt's worst crime would be killing Tubbo, even if it will never happen in this timeline.

“You have no idea what you’ve done,” Phil said, looking like he was getting ready to gut Schlatt like a fish.

Schlatt let out a bitter laugh. “Actually, I have a pretty good idea of what I’ve done,” he said, “And I’m trying to make things right.”

“Make things right?” Phil demanded, “You think you can just make things right? My *son* is out there, completely lost to paranoia, and you think you can just make this right with a wave of your hand?”

“I never said that,” Schlatt said.

“Give me your communicator,” Phil demanded in such a way that Schlatt knew that he wasn’t going to take no for an answer.

Schlatt pulled his communicator out of his pocket and dropped it into Phil’s hand. Phil immediately punched in a number and pressed call, holding the communicator up to his ear.

“Pick up, pick up, pick up,” Phil muttered, all of the anger gone and instead replaced with worry.

Clearly, somebody picked up the phone, because Phil’s face looked like a mixture of relief and horror.

“Wil, it’s me,” Phil said, his voice suddenly soft, “It’s Phil. Listen, Wil, you need help, please, let me help...” Phil swore underneath his breath.

Phil dropped the communicator onto Schlatt’s desk, massaging his forehead.

“Wilbur less than receptive?” Schlatt asked.

Phil glared at Schlatt. “He’s under the impression that you’re holding Tommy captive, which I would believe based on your past crimes if it weren’t for the fact that Tommy called me for help, and there would be no way that you would allow a prisoner to call his father like that.”

“Probably not,” Schlatt agreed, “And I don’t blame him for being under that impression. In all fairness, he held Tubbo captive about four or five days ago.”

Philza froze. “What?” he whispered.

“You heard me,” Schlatt said, his own tone darkening, “Tubbo tried to rescue Tommy from Wilbur and got captured himself.”

Come to think of it, Schlatt had never lectured Tubbo over disobeying direct orders like that. It was probably for the best. Tubbo wouldn’t have reacted too great to being yelled at by his former abuser.

“Rescue Tommy from Wilbur?” Phil asked, “What the hell are you talking about?”

Oh god, did Tommy seriously leave out the vital detail that Wilbur had been emotionally abusing him? Because if so, Schlatt was going to have some serious words with him on what is classified as *important* to tell your father.

“Wilbur has been emotionally abusing your son,” Schlatt said frankly, “I won’t go into all of the details, mainly because I don’t know all of the details myself. I *do* know, however, that Wilbur gaslighted Tommy into thinking that Tubbo didn’t care about him, so Tubbo felt the need to personally set the record straight.”

“Oh my god,” Phil whispered, “I knew Tommy mentioned a villain arc, but never did I think... he seemed to genuinely care about Tommy on the phone...”

“Oh, he does genuinely care about Tommy.” Schlatt felt a little sick at the thought. “Just possessively so.”

Phil looked like he was about to be sick. “Where’s Tommy now?”

Schlatt pointed to his left, which was the general direction of Tommy’s room. “He’s currently asleep, I hope. Though, I wouldn’t be surprised if he was stubbornly staying awake right about now.”

Phil turned around, walking toward the door. “I’m speaking with him.”

Schlatt stood up. “Wait a second,” he said, “I want to make some things clear with you first.”

Phil turned around, crossing his arms. “You’re not exactly in a position to be making things clear with me, mate,” he said coldly, “I will not hesitate to put you down myself if you threaten me or my sons again.”

Schlatt shook his head, returning Phil’s glare. “Actually, this is *for* your sons.”

Phil raised his eyebrows. “Well?”

“Under no circumstances will you kill Wilbur,” Schlatt began, “He is your *son*, and he needs *therapy* and probably some incarceration, but not *death*.”

Phil’s face darkened. “Okay, what’s going on?”

Schlatt frowned. “What do you mean?”

Phil took a step forward. “I *mean*, that Tommy told me almost exactly the same thing,” he said, his voice sounding dangerous again, “Now, why would Tommy think that I would kill my own son? Were you the one who planted that idea into his head? Because that’s a pretty sick thing to do.”

Schlatt laughed humorlessly. “If you think that *I* put that idea into his head, you have another thing coming.”

“Then who did?” Phil snarled, walking all the way up to Schlatt’s desk, “Because two people don’t simultaneously wake up thinking the same exact thing without any discernable reason.”

“Yeah, I think you’ll have to ask Tommy that,” Schlatt said, “Because it’s his business as much as mine, and I trust him to decide whether or not he wants to trust you.”

“*Trust me?*” Phil was practically spitting at this point, “This is about my *son*. As his father, I have the *right* to know—”

“As his father, you should’ve been there for him since day one,” Schlatt snarled, “You should’ve come as soon as you heard that Tommy, who is a damn *teenager*, was fighting in an adult’s war.”

Phil slammed his hand against the desk, leaning forward. “Don’t tell me how I should—”

“I think I will,” Schlatt interrupted, leaning in close himself, “Because of your negligence, you have one son under the impression that nobody loves him, another son who feels horrifically uncomfortable in healthy relationships, and another son who has lost his freaking finger.”

Phil gaped. “His finger?”

Schlatt gestured to the box still sitting on the desk. “You can take a look if you’d like.”

Silence filled the room as Schlatt watched Phil carefully pick up the box and open it. Phil blanched.

“Oh my god,” he whispered, his voice wavering. Schlatt vaguely wondered if he was going to puke. It wouldn’t be the first time someone puked all over these floors. Schlatt being the first time, of course.

Yeah, that sounded about right.

Phil snapped the box shut, slamming the thing back down on the desk.

“Who did this?” Phil demanded, still sounding like he wanted to puke, “Was it Wilbur?”

“We’re not one-hundred-percent sure,” Schlatt admitted, giving the box a look of mistrust, “But we do know that it was probably Dream’s idea.”

Phil’s face darkened. “I’m going to kill him,” he growled, turning back toward the door.

“Hold up,” Schlatt said quickly. Phil snapped his head toward Schlatt, giving him a dangerous look. Schlatt raised his arms in surrender. “Listen, I’m all for killing Dream, but the simple fact of the matter is that we have no idea where he is.”

“I’ll find him,” Phil said confidently, “And then I’ll take Wilbur home and save Techno—”

“One thing at a time,” Schlatt interrupted, “First thing in the morning, you are speaking to Tommy. I understand that you want to save Technoblade and knock some sense into Wilbur, we all do, but for once in your life, you need to be there for Tommy.”

Phil glared. “You don’t tell me how I’ve screwed up, because whatever I’ve done, you’ve done worse.”

“I agree,” Schlatt said, “But that’s not actually the point. Tommy needs you, so be there for him damnit.”

“Wilbur and Techno need me too.”

“Well then be there for Tommy, call Wilbur, and help us save Techno when the time comes,” Schlatt said, “But I’ve had enough of you ignoring Tommy when he needs you most.”

Schlatt had thought for sure that Phil would’ve taken Tommy away from exile instantly after seeing that Tommy was still sleeping in a freaking *tent*, after seeing that Tommy was thin, scarred, and miserable.

He had been sorely disappointed. He wasn’t about to be disappointed again.

Phil’s glare didn’t abate, but he sighed and said, “Fine.”

Schlatt nodded. “Good.”

Chapter End Notes

I know I implied that Dream was going to give up on manipulating Techno, but that would be a very out-of-character thing for Dream to do, so he's back at it.

Schlatt is ready to call Phil out for his B- parenting. Phil is ready to call Schlatt out for his literal terribleness before the story started. Both of them are ready to call a truce to kill Dream.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading! <3

Bonding is Hard

Chapter Summary

Tubbo and Tommy admit a few truths. Phil tries to talk to his son.

Chapter Notes

TW: nightmares, ptsd, implied/referenced child abuse, touch-starved behaviors, traumatized behaviors, implied/referenced alcoholic violence, idk what else to say

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy was back in Pogtopia. He could hear the sound of hissing, like something was about to blow up, but he couldn't figure out where it was coming from. He braced for impact.

The hissing stopped. Nothing happened.

Slowly, Tommy looked around, confused about the anomaly. Why hadn't there been any explosions? There were always explosions.

"Hey, Tomathy," a familiar voice said, turning Tommy's heart to ice.

Tommy spun around. Dream was standing there, wearing that stupid mask.

"Dream?" Tommy whispered. He stumbled backwards. What was Dream doing here? How did Dream find him?

"Put your armor in the hole, Tommy," Dream said quietly.

Tommy fumbled with his armor straps, looking for the hole. He couldn't see anything but the flat stone floor of the ravine.

"Where's the hole?" he asked.

Tommy let out a startled shout as Dream smacked him.

"The hole is right there," Dream said, his voice cold, "Don't play dumb."

Tommy looked over at where Dream was pointing, and sure enough, there was a hole recently dug into the ground. Tommy quickly dropped his armor inside.

Dream placed down the TNT and lit it, causing Tommy's armor to disappear in the small explosion. Tommy flinched.

Dream's voice changed in inflection, sounding... kinder, for lack of a better word.

"Oh Tommy," he cooed, "You don't need to worry. I'll protect you."

They were standing in the kitchen of Tommy's old home, back before he and Wilbur took off for adventure. He didn't question how they had gotten there.

Tommy watched in horrified fascination as Dream took off his mask, revealing... Wilbur's face.

Tommy's heart pounded against his chest so hard that it hurt. Dream was Wilbur this entire time? But, but that didn't make any sense.

"It's okay," Wilbur said, that unstable glint in his eyes, "I'm here."

Tommy wanted to run, but he couldn't move. He couldn't say anything. It was as if some invisible force had lodged him to the spot he was standing.

Wilbur pulled him into a hug, and Tommy wanted to puke.

Wilbur gasped, blood dribbling out of his mouth, and Tommy jerked away to see a sword protruding from his chest. Tommy quickly looked for the culprit, only to see Phil standing above a now collapsed Wilbur.

"You were supposed to save me," Ghostbur said, "Why didn't you save me?"

"I tried," Tommy pleaded, "Please, I tried."

"You're a liability," Schlatt said, "I think it's back to exile with you."

And Dream was standing in front of him, his mask smiling dangerously, and Tommy wanted to run, he needed to get away, *please*—

Tommy snapped his eyes open, suddenly aware of the blankets and fresh air rubbing against his skin.

He was in the bedroom in Manberg. Rolled to the side, Tommy could see Clementine sleeping next to him. Next to Clementine, Tubbo was also sleeping, his arm draped across Clementine's fur.

His heart was still trying to break the world record for most beats per minute, so Tommy took a shuddering breath, hoping to calm it down.

"Tommy?" Tubbo whispered, his eyes opening suddenly.

Tommy began running his fingers through Clementine's fur, causing the dog to blink awake. She didn't move abruptly, though, so that was nice.

"Hey," Tommy said quietly, "Go back to sleep. Just a nightmare."

Tubbo pulled out his communicator, glancing at something. Tommy watched as Tubbo sat up.

"Nah," he said, "It's already five am."

Tommy blinked. "You wake up at five am?"

"Sometimes," Tubbo said, sounding way too chipper for someone who had been woken up at *five am*. Tubbo climbed out of the bed. "Sometimes it's around four-thirty, or even four on particularly busy days."

Tommy stared at Tubbo, making no move to sit up or get out of the bed. "How," he muttered.

Sure, Tommy woke up at unearthly hours as well, but that was mostly due to things like nightmares, not *work*.

Tubbo opened the closet and pulled out a suit. Tommy blinked, finally pulling himself into a sitting position.

"Why the hell is there a suit in the closet?" Tommy demanded.

Tubbo shrugged, peeling off his shirt. "There's a suit in almost all of the closets in the white house. It's so we can make a quick change in case any incidents stained our clothes."

Tommy narrowed his eyes. "What sort of 'incidents'?"

"Um... anything really," Tubbo said, his voice more fake and high-pitched than before.

"*Tubbo...*" Tommy said suspiciously.

Tubbo sighed as he shoved his suit on. "Listen," he said, "Sometimes Schlatt... he would get these fits, y'know? Back when he was still drinking, I mean. So, uh, sometimes we'd get a little splashed with wine. It happens."

Tommy pulled himself out of bed, crossing his arms. "Okay, first of all, it does not just *happen*. Second of all, you're hiding something."

Tubbo rolled his eyes, pulling his tie around his neck. "Tommy, if we're going to talk in terms of hiding something, you are definitely not one to talk."

Tommy hated to admit it, but Tubbo had a point. He was keeping basically everything unpleasant about his relationships with Wilbur and Dream under lock and key, with the exceptions of what Tubbo saw personally.

Tommy hated the idea of opening up, of telling Tubbo how pathetic and weak he had been around Dream. But... if it got Tubbo to open up, then maybe Tommy could stand doing it,

just this once.

With a groan, Tommy said, “If I tell you one thing about exile, will you tell me one thing you’re hiding?”

Tubbo’s jaw dropped, his hands stalling half-way through straightening his tie.

“Is that a yes or a no?” Tommy asked impatiently, already regretting this decision.

Tubbo snapped his mouth shut, nodding. “Um, yes, if you’re comfortable, that is, I don’t want—”

Tommy snorted, trying to hide the anxiety that was trying to twist knots in his stomach. “I suggested it.”

Tubbo gave Tommy a small smile that didn’t stick. “Fair enough.”

“Okay.” Tommy took a deep breath. He could do this. He could do this. “Um... when I was in exile, Dre-Dream would blow up my armor, um, daily.”

Tubbo stared at Tommy, looking horrified. Tommy hated it. He didn’t need Tubbo’s pity.

“Okay, now it’s your turn,” Tommy snapped.

“Oh, right.” Tubbo rubbed the back of his neck. “Well, uh, it’s nothing much compared to Wilbur and Dream, that stuff was downright unpleasant, and I’m not sure—”

“Tubbo,” Tommy said in monotone, “Don’t be an idiot.”

Tubbo cringed, and Tommy winced.

“I just meant that it can still be... bad,” Tommy fumblingly elaborated, “You know?”

“Oh,” Tubbo said, sagging a little bit, “Well, um, sometimes blood would get on our suits. You, uh, you probably know how it is. Bloody nose. Maybe a few cuts from glass being thrown around.”

Tommy felt sick, but that quickly turned back around into boiling rage.

“I’m going to kill him,” Tommy growled, marching toward the door. Clementine leaped off of the bed and followed loyally.

“You can’t kill him,” Tubbo said tiredly.

“And why not?” Tommy demanded, spinning around to face Tubbo again, “He *hurt* you, he *killed* you! It’s not like he doesn’t currently have lives to spare!”

And besides, maybe the killing would get Schlatt to drop the nice-guy ruse, and Tommy could start figuring out how to deal with Schlatt’s methods of torment.

“*Tommy,*” Tubbo pleaded, “Schlatt has done nothing but try to help us since we time-jumped. Could you *please* just give him a chance?”

Tubbo had a point. Schlatt *had* almost died due to withdrawal, and if someone had told Tommy that Schlatt was ever going to do that a week ago, he would’ve laughed in their faces. Of course, it was possible Schlatt had just been trying to avoid another heart attack, who wouldn’t? But still, maybe Tubbo had a small point.

But only a small one.

Clenching his fists, Tommy took a deep breath.

“Fine,” he muttered, “But if lays *one hand* on you—”

“Then you can kill him as many times as you’d like,” Tubbo said, smiling slightly, “But I really don’t think he’ll do that.”

“He’d better not,” Tommy muttered, crossing his arms again.

If Schlatt decided to be a massive jerk, he’d better do it with Tommy, not Tubbo.

“Well, I’m going to get some breakfast,” Tubbo yawned, straightening his tie and heading toward the door, “You coming with?”

Tommy hesitated. “Actually...” he said, “I think I’m going to take a shower. I feel kind of gross.”

Tubbo wrinkled his nose and nodded. “Not going to lie dude, you look kind of gross.”

Tommy gasped in mock offense. “I’ll have you know that you are way grosser than I will ever be.”

Tubbo laughed. “If you say so,” he said.

Tommy smiled. “I’ll see you later, Big T. Make sure you don’t eat all of the bacon.”

Tubbo opened the door. “Don’t worry, I’ll be sure to save plenty for you.”

After Tubbo closed the door behind him, Tommy re-opened it and crouched next to Clementine.

“Listen closely, Clem,” he said to his dog, who cocked her head at him, “I want you to follow Tubbo.” Tommy pointed in the direction of Tubbo’s disappearing form. “If anyone tries to hurt him, bite them.”

Clementine barked, so Tommy took it that she at least sort of understood what he said.

Or maybe Tommy was delusional. He wasn’t sure he particularly cared at the moment.

“Alright, make me proud.”

Clementine barked again and started dashing after Tubbo. Tommy saluted in her direction. Then, Tommy re-shut the door and went into the bathroom, which was attached to his bedroom.

Tommy made the water scalding, but Tommy didn't really care that he was probably wasting all of the hot water in the White House. And that wasn't an exaggeration. He sat in that shower, just letting the water droplets hit him like they were giving him a back massage, for way longer than any normal person would sit in a shower.

Finally, Tommy forced himself out of the shower and back into the real world. On the bright side, the mirror was all fogged up, so at least he didn't have to look at his sunken cheeks and the dark bags that were probably under his eyes.

Tommy didn't want to wear a suit—they were stiff; not to mention he hadn't the slightest idea on how to tie a tie—so he went searched the dresser in the guest bedroom for some other clothes. Much to his relief, there were some jeans and a red sweater, so he wouldn't be forced to wear his old, disgusting clothes.

Now, all that was left to be done was to track down Tubbo. Shouldn't be too difficult.

Combing his hair with his fingers, Tommy exited his room and walked down the hall toward the kitchen. He hoped that Tubbo had made some coffee, because Tommy could really do with the caffeine right about now. He wasn't like Wilbur; Wilbur seemed to use coffee as a coping mechanism, which was what the gapples were for.

Thinking about gapples reminded Tommy of Techno.

Oh prime, Techno.

Tommy hadn't thought about him *once* so far this morning. Here Tommy was, enjoying nice showers and new clothes and a *dog*, all while Techno was missing a finger and suffering at the hands of Dream and Wilbur.

Tommy froze in the middle of the hallway, staring at his hand. As he clenched and unclenched his fist, he tried to imagine not having all five of his fingers. He tried to imagine his own finger sitting on a red pillow.

Tommy's stomach churned. He wasn't sure he was hungry anymore.

He needed to save Techno. But he didn't know where Techno was. Dream said to meet him in a week. But... there was no guarantee that Dream would even bring Techno with him. He had said he would tell Tommy where Techno was, but he never technically said that Techno would be at the coordinates. What if they launched this ambush and Techno wasn't even there? What then?

Tommy needed to do something. He needed to talk to Dream, try to iron out the terms so that Tommy *knew* that the plan would work. Desperate shots in the dark never did anything good for anyone.

If he wanted to talk to Dream, he needed a communicator, which he didn't have. Schlatt said that he was getting one for Tommy, but Tommy took Schlatt's word with a grain of salt. Besides, even if he *was* getting one for Tommy, Tommy didn't know Dream's number. The chances of anyone giving it to him were very slim.

So, Tommy would just have to steal someone else's communicator. Easy. Tommy was a master at the art of thievery.

And Tommy knew exactly the person he wanted to steal from.

Then again, Schlatt was probably carrying his communicator in his pocket, and Tommy couldn't say he was the best pick-pocket in the world.

Oh well, Tommy would figure something out. He just needed to find Schlatt.

Tommy immediately spun around and started heading toward Schlatt's office. Schlatt never seemed to leave that place. Maybe Tommy could trick him into giving him the communicator.

Tommy was snapped out of his thoughts by a familiar voice.

"Tommy, mate!"

Tommy automatically flinched at being addressed so suddenly.

He turned around to see *Phil* walking toward him. He was frowning, and Tommy took an instinctive step back.

"Phil?" Tommy asked, his voice cracking.

Phil stopped about a foot in front of Tommy, stuffing his hands into the pockets of his black robe. His black wings were shaking slightly. Was he... scared? Nervous?

Tommy was making stuff up, he had to be. Why would Phil be nervous? If anything, Tommy should be nervous around Phil, even though he was Tommy's father.

"Hey, Toms—" Tommy tried not to flinch at the nickname. "—can we talk for a minute?"

"Uh... yeah," Tommy said, careful to keep his voice from revealing any emotion, "We can talk."

"Maybe we shouldn't do it out in the open," Phil said, glancing around the hallway, which was currently empty.

Still, Tommy could see Phil's point, so he followed Phil into a room full of maps. Phil closed the door behind them, and Tommy tried to keep his heart rate from spiking.

This was Phil. This wasn't Schlatt. This wasn't Wilbur. This wasn't Dream. This was Phil. Phil had never hurt Tommy.

He had killed Wilbur; that had hurt.

Phil had never *directly* hurt Tommy.

Tommy would be fine.

As Phil leaned against the wall, looking into his son's no-longer-bright blue eyes, he knew he had screwed up.

Now, Phil was already very aware of how much he had screwed up; Wilbur and Schlatt had made sure of that. (Not that Phil would ever admit to *Schlatt*, the man who had exiled his children, of his flaws.) But seeing Tommy like this was like adding salt to the wound.

Tommy had flinched, *flinched*, when Phil came up from behind. He had stepped away from Phil. His voice was closed off.

His eyes were dull.

What had happened to his son?

Schlatt's voice echoed in his head, "*I think you'll have to ask Tommy that.*"

However, Phil knew Tommy, and he knew that a direct question would probably be deflected.

Maybe... now would be a good time to gage the winds, see where Tommy was at in general.

"Hey mate," he said, keeping his voice as gentle and inviting as possible, "Long time no see, huh?"

Tommy nodded, his face betraying no emotion. "Yeah. Haven't seen you since we left for the SMP."

Phil winced. He deserved that.

After waiting for a few moments for Tommy to continue the conversation and Tommy taking no such opening, Phil decided that maybe it would be simpler to just get it over with."

"Tommy," Phil whispered, "What happened to you?"

Tommy laughed, but it wasn't that same loud, bright laugh that Phil had always heard from Tommy. This laugh was... humorless. Broken.

Phil's heart felt like it had snapped in half.

"A whole ton of crap," Tommy said blandly, stuffing his hands into his pockets, "But I'm pretty sure you already knew that."

"Schlatt has as good as told me that there's something more than meets the eye going on here," Phil said, his voice becoming slightly firmer, "I just... I want to know why you would

both think I would kill Wilbur.”

Tommy’s face paled, and Phil wanted nothing more than to pull his son into an embrace as Tommy stumbled a few more steps back. But he didn’t, instead watching his son as he glared at Phil.

“I don’t need to tell you crap,” Tommy said, his voice wavering, “I don’t owe you anything.”

Phil wanted to protest. He wanted to demand to know what was going on. Why had Schlatt suddenly become the paragon of virtue? Why had both Schlatt and Tommy had the same horrific thought? Why was Tommy like *this*? What the hell was going on?

But Tommy looked so very afraid, despite the anger he was showing. Phil knew that yelling or even a simple command might either cause his son to shatter in front of him or drive him farther away. Phil didn’t want either of those.

“You’re right,” Phil said quietly, “You don’t owe me anything. But I’m your father, and I want to help you.”

For whatever reason, these words only made Tommy’s scowl deepen.

“Then why didn’t you?” he demanded, his voice lowering to a low growl, “Where the *hell* have you been?”

Phil flinched.

“I thought you were old enough to fight in your own wars,” Phil admitted, guilt squeezing his chest, “I realize now I was wrong.”

“Do you think I care about the wars?!” Tommy shouted.

You should, Phil thought grimly to himself.

Tommy yanked his hands out of his pockets and began gesturing wildly. “I don’t care about the wars! I care about Wilbur! He’s been struggling and if you had just *been there* and if you had just *tried* to help him, maybe he wouldn’t be like this. But *no*, he hands you a sword once, and you decide that killing him is the only option. We didn’t even give him a funeral!”

The room was dead silent, like a photo of glass right as it was about to hit the ground.

Tommy took another step back, staring at Phil with gut-wrenching fear. Phil watched as Tommy ran his fingers through his hair and let out a shuddering breath.

“Damnit,” his son muttered, curling in on himself, “Damnit, you really did it this time, Tommy.”

“Toms,” Phil began, his voice wavering. Tommy flinched at the nickname, and Phil tried not to think about what that meant. He tried not to think about what *any of it* meant. “Wilbur’s alive. I didn’t kill him.”

“I know that, idiot,” Tommy snapped, straightening from his original curled position, “I’m not *stupid*.”

He said the last word almost like a plea, almost like he needed confirmation that he wasn’t stupid. Where was the self-confidence Tommy used to possess in leaps and bounds?

What had happened to his son?

“You’re not stupid,” Phil agreed, his voice almost to a whisper, “Which is why I don’t understand what you were talking about earlier.”

Tommy muttered something under his breath before throwing his arms in the air in a seemingly ‘*I give up*’ gesture.

“We’re from the future,” Tommy said, “Believe it or don’t. I’m not sure I care anymore.”

And with that, Tommy left the room, slamming the door behind him.

Chapter End Notes

So... today's stream was... pleasant (2/21). I low key want to create a one-shot for it, but I'm running really short on time before i have to go to bed, so i guess we'll see how it goes.

Anyway, plot notes, um... honestly, I don't have much to say. Phil's trying. Tommy's 'coping.' Tubbo's got plenty of problems of his own. Y'know, the usual.

Anyway, thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in comments! <3

Rooftop Secrets

Chapter Summary

Tommy talks to Wilbur, Dream, Techno, and Phil.

He also steals Schlatt's communicator.

Chapter Notes

Tw: manipulation, suicidal thoughts and tendencies, child abuse, mental illness, possessive behavior, guilt, self-hatred

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy wanted to die.

He wasn't even sure if he was being melodramatic anymore.

Because Phil had finally come, Phil had finally tried to be there for him, and Tommy shoved him away, *like he always did*. Because Tommy wasn't anything more than a spoiled brat who pushed people away until he was alone. Because nobody loved Tommy in the first place.

Because everyone who had ever promised to protect him had only hurt him instead.

Nothing made sense anymore; it was like the world had been tilted. Schlatt wasn't evil. Phil wanted to help. Techno lost.

At least Dream was still a manipulative jerk, at least Tommy could cling onto that constant, if nothing else.

As Tommy ran down the halls, away from Phil, away from *everyone*, he pulled the small slip of paper out of his pocket. The one that had caused him so much fear, so much panic.

I can't wait for us to have more fun together.

-Your only friend, Dream

Come to think of it, how did Dream even know what buttons to push for Tommy to become a pathetic mess? How did Dream know what exactly would cause Tommy to crumble to his

will? Dream shouldn't know *any* of that.

And a horrible realization hit Tommy like a truck, and he skidded to a halt in the middle of the hallway.

Dream was like him. Dream was like Tubbo. Dream was like Schlatt.

Dream was from the future.

Why hadn't he seen it sooner? Had he just forgotten? Was he really that stupid? Did everyone else already know?

Your friend, your only friend, "I'm your friend, Tommy", "That's what friends are for", "You betrayed me!"

"Kid?"

Tommy jumped, looking up from the note now slightly crumpled up in his hand. Schlatt was standing about three feet away from him, looking... concerned?

That was the stupidest thing Tommy had ever heard. Schlatt didn't get concerned. Schlatt was *evil*. He had hurt Tubbo. Schlatt was probably pretending, probably trying to make Tommy think that they were friends, trying to gain a pawn.

Tubbo might trust Schlatt, but Tommy didn't trust him as far as he could throw him.

"What do you want?" Tommy spat, scowling.

Schlatt shrugged. "I was just going to get some breakfast," he said, sounding *calm*, like Tommy hadn't made the worst discovery of his life, "Do you want to come with?"

Tommy made sure that his scowl conveyed the sheer level of hatred he felt toward Schlatt before replying.

"No, but you know what I do want?" he asked, suddenly remembering what he was doing before being accosted by Phil.

Schlatt raised an eyebrow, but he wasn't frowning. Tommy couldn't decide if that was a good thing or not.

"What's that?" Schlatt asked, sounding open to anything, which was ridiculous, because Schlatt only ever wanted to do things his way.

"Your communicator," Tommy said, holding out his hand like Dream would whenever he'd demand any of Tommy's items.

Schlatt was apparently stupider than Tommy had previously thought, because he actually started taking his communicator out of his pocket.

"May I ask what you want it for?" Schlatt asked as he held it out to Tommy.

“Nope,” Tommy said, popping the ‘p.’ He snatched the communicator out of Schlatt’s hand and *ran*, hearing a startled cry from Schlatt.

Exhilaration rushed through Tommy’s veins. That had been *too* easy. He had just *stolen* from the *president*. More importantly, he had just stolen from *Schlatt*.

A more logical part of him said that if Schlatt gave it to him, it wasn’t really stealing. Tommy squashed down that logical part. Would an innocent man run?

Tommy let out a gleeful whoop as he skidded around the corner of one of the halls, ignoring the startled glances other members of the staff were giving him.

Eventually, after he had dashed up all of the flights of stairs and ended up on the top floor, exhaustion caught up with Tommy. He stopped near a large window, gasping for breath.

That had been... just... so great.

Tommy looked down at the communicator in his hand. *Schlatt’s* communicator. Tommy laugh. Schlatt’s face was probably hilarious right about now; the ram was probably *furious*—

And all of Tommy’s excitement crashed down into overwhelming dread.

What had Tommy been thinking, stealing Schlatt’s communicator? That sort of behavior was what got Tubbo to exile him in the first place. And now Tommy had gone ahead and made Schlatt needlessly angry. Was he going to take it out on Tubbo?

He should go back. Tommy knew he should go back now and return the communicator before it was too late, or before the situation got worse than it already was.

But he couldn’t. Whenever he thought about going back, he got overwhelming panic very reminiscent that had overwhelmed him when Tommy had ever entertained the idea of returning Logstedshire, like he was marching to his grave. Not to mention, Tommy still hadn’t talked to Dream. Tommy *needed* to talk to Dream.

Prime, he couldn’t even make try to make amends right.

Coward. Selfish. Screw-up.

Clementine would take care of Tubbo, Tommy was pretty sure. And Phil was there too; he wouldn’t let Schlatt hurt anyone. When the time was right, Tommy would come back and accept the punishment he deserved, but for now...

Tommy glanced at the window next to him, and the next thing he knew, he was undoing the latch with a small and prying the window open. He shivered slightly at the cold air that filled the hall, and he was suddenly grateful for the fact he was wearing a sweater instead of a T-shirt.

Tommy carefully climbed onto the edge of the window and glanced up to gage the distance from the window to the roof. It was only about a couple of feet, so Tommy grabbed onto the

fancy molding around the window and pulled himself up. Then he clutched onto the edge of the roof of the White House and heaved himself over.

Now sitting on the roof of the White House with his feet dangling, Tommy had a pretty good view of L'manberg. Or *Manberg*, as Schlatt liked to call it.

Wilbur's country actually looked nice from here, even if it was too dark to make out most of it. It looked like it had before the explosions went off and the withers were spawned and everyone had to start all over again.

Tommy tried not to think about a time when he stood on another roof, watching helplessly as Technoblade shot Tubbo full of fireworks. Tommy tried not to think of a time when he stood on a giant pole, ready to end it.

So instead, Tommy looked back down at Schlatt's communicator and pulled up the call function.

And there, at the very top of the recently called column, was *Wilbur Soot*.

When had Schlatt called Wilbur?

Without thinking, Tommy clicked on Wilbur's name and held the communicator up to his ear, dully listening to the ringing as he watched the morning sky slowly lighten.

Tommy jolted when Wilbur's aggravated voice came on the other line.

"I swear, Phil, if this is you, I will—"

"Wil?"

Tommy's voice broke at the name, but he was too busy clutching onto the communicator like it was Wilbur himself to care.

There was an abrupt silence. Then, Wilbur whispered,

"Tommy?"

Tommy hugged his knees to his chest, his heels firmly placed on the edge of the roof. His toes were poking over the side.

"Yeah," Tommy sighed, "It's me."

"Tommy, Toms, baby, how are you talking to me?" Wilbur's voice sounded desperate, rushed, worried. "Did you escape? Why do you have Schlatt's communicator?"

Tommy let out a small chuckle. "I stole it," he said, "sorta."

Wilbur let out a chilling laugh that reverberated through the communicator. Tommy shrunk into his sweater.

“That’s my boy,” Wilbur said fondly.

Tommy smiled in spite of himself.

“Tommy, where are you?” Wilbur’s voice became suddenly serious. “I can go pick you up. We’re hidden in a place where nobody in Manberg can find us.”

Tommy’s heart picked up. This was an opportunity. He could maybe convince Wilbur to tell him where exactly he’s hidden. He could save Techno. He could get Wilbur away from Dream.

“You can’t tell me where you are?” Tommy demanded, trying to inject some of his old forcefulness into his voice, “Wouldn’t be easier if I just came to you?”

Guilt stabbed at Tommy’s chest, but he pushed it aside. Techno needed him. Wilbur would understand. Eventually.

Or it would just make things way worse.

A low chuckle emerged from the phone, and Tommy flinched.

“Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,” Wilbur said, sounding amused, “How do I know someone isn’t listening into this conversation right now? It’s far safer if we have a separate rendezvous, and then I’ll kill anyone who dared track you down.”

Tommy’s stomach churned at the blood-thirstiness in Wilbur’s voice. He almost sounded like Techno when he gave into the voices. He almost sounded like *Dream*.

Tommy hated himself for making that comparison. It wasn’t remotely the same. At least Wilbur’s love was real.

Right?

Speaking of Dream...

Tommy swallowed. “Do you trust Dream?”

Silence.

“Oh, Toms, I don’t trust anyone,” Wilbur said, his voice sounding confident, “I know he scares you, but Dream’s been incredibly useful as of late, so I’m allowing him to help me for now.”

“Dream’s been lying to you,” Tommy said, willing his voice not to shake, “He doesn’t want to help you.”

“The moment he betrays me, I’ll discard him,” Wilbur said, sounding impatient, “Honestly, Tommy, I’m just doing what’s best.”

That was *it*.

“You’re not using him!” Tommy shouted, “He’s using you! Why won’t you see that? The only thing Dream wants is *me*! But you’re so up in your head ‘oh, I’m Wilbur, I’m going to trust this idiot in a mask because he said he’d—”

“You’re being ridiculous,” Wilbur snapped, “I frankly don’t care what Dream wants. He’s willing to help me get you back, so that’s all that matters.”

“Aren’t you listening to me?” Tommy demanded, “He wants *me*. He’ll steal me away from you before you can blink! Why are you trusting him?!”

“*Tommy!*”

Tommy stopped breathing. Wilbur let out a loud sigh.

“Thank god, you shut up,” he moaned, “Tommy, you’re being foolish. I’ve got Dream perfectly under control. Now, *where are you?*”

It was a demand. A demand that Tommy forced himself to ignore.

“Why did you hurt Techno?” Tommy asked shortly.

Wilbur’s voice darkened. “He was a traitor. He helped Manberg steal you from me.”

That wasn’t quite true, but Tommy was too afraid of what would happen if he corrected him.

“He’s our *brother*.” Tommy shut his eyes, trying to shut out the memory of Techno trying to hurt *him*.

“He’s no brother of mine.” Based on the vitriol in Wilbur’s voice, Tommy could tell that he believed it too.

“Why?” Tommy demanded, “What makes me any different, what makes me—”

“Because you’re the only thing I have anymore, Tommy!” Wilbur shouted, his voice beating against Tommy’s eardrums, “You’re the *only* thing! Fundy’s gone, *L’manberg’s* gone, and you’re all I have left. You’re my only reason for living right now, so I *swear*—”

“*You’re my only reason for living right now.*” “*He wanted me to kill him.*”

Tommy’s breath caught in his throat, and he found himself staring past his toes and toward the ground, so far away from the roof he was sitting on.

“You’ve thought about killing yourself?” Tommy asked abruptly, cutting Wilbur’s rant short.

Wilbur sounded shaken, *shaken*, when he spoke next.

“I-I don’t—*god*, Tommy. Yeah, I guess I have. What of it?”

And like little pieces of a puzzle, things began to click together. The reason Wilbur made Tommy president, even though he was about to blow the place to bits. The reason Tommy

would be making his speech right on top of TNT that would kill him instantly.

“If-if I were to jump off this roof right now, would you kill yourself?” Tommy wanted to rip his eyes away from the fall he was hypothetically condemning himself to, but he couldn’t look away.

“Are you on a roof?!” Wilbur exclaimed, “Tommy, Tommy, get down from there right now. Wilbur’s coming for you. Please, get down, get down, Tommy, get down *right this instant*, why aren’t you answering me *damnit!*”

Tommy didn’t curl in on himself, but he wanted to.

“I’m not going to jump,” Tommy muttered, “I was just asking.” He took a deep breath. “I’ll try again. Would you kill me if you planned on killing yourself?”

“Where are you, Tommy?” Wilbur asked shortly.

Tommy gritted his teeth in frustration. “Answer the damn question first.”

“Tommy, I’m only going to ask this one more time,” Wilbur said, his voice now conveying a very real threat, “*Where. Are. You?*”

Tommy flinched away from his communicator, and the words stumbled out before he could stop them.

“I’m on top of the roof of the White House,” he said, “You won’t be able to get to me from here.”

Tommy hung up the call before he could hear Wilbur’s reply.

Tommy didn’t want to think about what Wilbur’s call meant, so he instantly scrolled through the contacts list until he found Dream’s number. He jammed on it violently.

Dream answered almost instantly.

“Hello, Tomathy,” he said smoothly, “I hope you’re wearing a jacket up there.”

Tommy felt ice crawl up his bones. How did Dream know? How did Dream know that he wasn’t Schlatt? How did Dream know that Tommy was up on the roof? Was Dream watching him right now?

“How—”

Dream laughed. “Wouldn’t you like to know?”

“Yeah, I would, moron,” Tommy snapped, throwing caution to the winds, “That’s why I asked.”

“*Tommy*,” Dream said warningly, “Watch your tone.”

Tommy shrunk back before remembering where he was. He wasn't in Logstedshire anymore. Dream couldn't control him.

"And why should I?" Tommy demanded, "You're nowhere near me—" He hoped. "—you can't do crap."

Tommy could just *hear* the head tilt in Dream's voice. "Oh?" he asked, "But what about Techno? He's in the room with me right now. I could always just—"

"Woah, wait, wait, wait," Tommy hurriedly rushed out, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I didn't mean it, don't hurt Techno, please don't hurt Techno."

Dream hummed, and Tommy focused his vision on his toes. "Well, since you asked *so* politely, I suppose I won't. Who knows, maybe if you behave yourself enough, I let you speak to him."

Hope surged through Tommy's body. "Really?" he asked, his voice cracking.

"Yeah, maybe," Dream said casually, "Wouldn't that be nice?"

Tommy buried his face in his knees. "Yeah," he whispered, "Yeah, that would."

"See?" Dream's voice sounded triumphant. He hated it. "See how easy it is to be civil? Honestly, Tommy, those people are a bad influence on you. Why are you even trusting *Schlatt* in the first place?"

Tommy flinched. "I-he-Tubbo—"

"Tubbo exiled you," Dream said, like he was teaching a school-lesson.

"I know that," Tommy snapped, irritated, "But he's—"

"What did we say about being good?" Dream asked softly.

If Tommy could curl up any more than he already had in his precarious spot on the roof, he would've done so. Shame burned at his insides.

"Right," Tommy whispered, "Sorry. Please, it won't happen again. Please, I just want to speak to Techno."

"And I might," Dream said breezily, "But I assume you had a reason for calling? Unless you just missed me."

Tommy bit back a '*you wish.*'

"You-you said that Tubbo and I would meet you at the coordinates you sent," Tommy said shakily, "I just... I just wanted to make sure that Techno would actually be there."

"You're not exactly in the position to make demands, Tommy," Dream said warningly. Dream sighed, and Tommy tensed. "But, since I'm so generous, yes he'll be there."

“Really?” Tommy asked, “You’re not lying?”

“Oh, Tommy,” Dream tutted, “Why would I lie?”

Because that’s all Dream ever did. He *lied*, and *hurt*, and... *no*, *Dream was his friend; Dream only wanted what’s best for him*.

No, Dream was a horrible person.

Tommy hated how mixed up his mind got at times like these. Why did he think calling Dream was a good idea? It only made him more miserable.

“Is that all you wanted to ask?” Dream asked.

Tommy nodded before remembering that he was talking on a phone. “Yes.”

“Okay, you can speak to Techno since you mostly behaved yourself,” Dream said, “I’m being generous, you know.”

“I know.” Tommy shut his eyes, his head still in his knees. “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome.”

There was silence on the line, and Tommy waited with bated breath, waiting for Techno’s voice to come on the phone.

“Tommy?”

Techno’s voice was hoarse, like he hadn’t used it often, and there was a underlying *something* underneath his tone. But Tommy didn’t care, because it was Techno, and he was alive, and he could still speak, and Tommy could hear him.

“Techno,” Tommy whispered. He cringed. Why was he whispering at Technoblade? That was embarrassing. “Technoblade,” he said a little more loudly this time, “Are you alright?” He winced. “Dumb question, sorry, sorry. Are you hanging in there? Please tell me Dream hasn’t been trying any of his mind-screwery with you—”

“Tommy,” Techno interrupted, more gently than Wilbur had earlier, “I’m fine. A little banged up, but fine.”

“I saw what happened to your finger,” Tommy whispered.

This time, Techno’s voice was colored with anger. “Schlatt showed that to you?”

“No,” Tommy said loudly, “Dream or someone stuck it on my windowsill. It was in a nice cushy box too.”

Techno let out a curse under his breath, but Tommy heard it anyway. “Well, I promise you that I’m fine, despite the unfortunate incident with my finger. Don’t worry about me.”

Tommy bit his lip; he was not all that comforted.

But it was nice to hear Techno's voice again.

Just with thinking that thought, Tommy must've jinxed it or something, because Dream's voice was next to emerge from the communicator.

"Well, that's all the Techno time you're getting today," he said brightly, "We'll see you in six days."

"Bye," Tommy said tightly, unsure if he wanted to shout or cower.

He decided to end the call instead, finally taking his head out of his knees to press the necessary button with a freeing beep.

Tommy could now see the proper beginnings of the sunrise on the horizon, with the sky turning slightly orange. It was peaceful.

The communicator buzzed, and Tommy looked down dully to see a new message pop up on the screen.

Philza Minecraft: Tommy, where are you

Philza Minecraft: I want to talk

Philza Minecraft: please

Tommy sighed. He wasn't sure if he was ready to talk to Phil yet, but this morning had already been full of uncomfortable conversations, so he might as well just get this one out of the way too.

TommyInnit: The roof.

Tommy wasn't sure how long he waited for the familiar sound of Phil's flapping wings... not long, he was pretty sure. The sun had begun to paint the clouds with shades of pink as Phil landed next to Tommy's seated position on the roof.

A part of Tommy told him to stop hugging his knees like a lonely child. The rest of him didn't care enough to move.

"I remember sitting on the roof when I was younger," Phil said, sitting down maybe two feet from Tommy.

Tommy didn't say anything.

Phil sighed, and Tommy winced.

"I talked to Schlatt and Tubbo," Phil said quietly, "Fundy too."

"Let me guess," Tommy said dully, "Fundy knows too now."

“Yeah,” Phil said quietly, “He was pretty ticked that he hadn’t been told sooner.”

“Sounds like him,” Tommy muttered.

“Schlatt told me some... upsetting things,” Phil continued, his wings twitching slightly.

Tommy rolled his eyes. “Spare me the pity party,” he said, “I lived through it; it’s over. Just tell me why you’re here.”

Phil slumped and let out a breathy laugh, taking his hat off to run his fingers through his hair. “Yeah, that’s fair.” There was a small pause. “I’m here to apologize.”

Tommy froze. What?

“For what?” Tommy asked.

“For everything,” Phil said, “For prioritizing Techno. For not coming sooner. For not being there while you were hurting. For... for killing Wilbur.”

“You didn’t do that,” Tommy said.

“Maybe not in this timeline,” Phil said, his voice sounding strange, “But I did it in another, so I’ll apologize anyway.”

Tommy put his head in his hands. “I’m sick of apologies.”

Techno apologized. Schlatt apologized. Tubbo apologized. Phil apologized. Heck, even *Fundy* apologized that one time.

Wilbur hadn’t apologized. Dream would *never* apologize.

No more words were exchanged between them. And, as Tommy watched the sun rise, he tried to pretend he could feel at peace.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was meant to have Fundy in it. That did not come to pass.

Y'all I am in awe of how popular this story has become... you guys are just the best. Thank you so much.

Wilbur's redemption arc is still going, even though none of you can see it. I cannot wait for the Wilbur's interlude so that you guys can finally see the full picture.

Um... Phil's trying in a good way, Dream's trying in a bad way, and Techno can't do much. Where's Clementine when you need her? (oh right with tubbo whoops)

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments! <3

Fundy Pops Off

Chapter Summary

Fundy pops off.

Chapter Notes

tw: implied/referenced child abuse, yelling, implied/referenced child neglect, ptsd, referenced death

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil remembered being Tommy's age.

He remembered feeling invisible against the world as he went from adventure to adventure, never staying in one place, always reaching higher and higher.

He met Kristin when he was twenty. It might sound cliché, but she calmed down his adventurous spirit, allowed him to create roots. He found Technoblade when he was twenty-two. Kristin found Wilbur a year later.

Tommy was born when he was twenty-seven. Kristin died on the same day. Grief threatened to swallow him whole, but he kept his head above water for his children's sake, at the very least.

Still, after Kristin's death, it got increasingly harder to ignore the call of the old days, of fighting monsters and exploring new dimensions. But Phil had a family to think of, so he stayed. He watched as Tommy took his first steps as Wilbur and Techno grew older and more mature.

But sometimes Phil worried there was a disconnect. A hole that Kristin had left behind and Phil could never hope to fill.

When Techno showed proficiency in the sword, Phil jumped on it. This was something he could teach his son; this was something he could show him; this was some way that he could be a good father.

Wilbur was more into music and the arts. Thinking about those things hurt Phil. They reminded him of Kristin.

He still taught Wilbur how to use a sword and bow; he still tried to express the undying love he felt his son. But Wilbur was less interested in those things, and Phil wasn't sure how else he could involve himself in his son's life.

So, he didn't. Between training Techno and raising Tommy and keeping everyone healthy, he pushed Wilbur to the side without even realizing it.

He started going back on adventures when Tommy was about ten years old. He couldn't ignore the call, and Techno was plenty old enough to come along. Wilbur was old enough to take care of Tommy while they were gone.

And they weren't gone for *too* often, Phil didn't think. He came back for birthdays and holidays, and when Wilbur and Tommy struck on their own, Phil didn't think much of it. Phil had been on his own when he was younger than their age.

Maybe that was why he didn't think much of the wars his sons had involved themselves in. Phil had been fighting since he was a teen. It didn't occur to him that there was something wrong with that image.

Maybe that sounded pathetic. Maybe Phil was a coward. Maybe he deserved every word Schlatt said.

Because now Phil understood that he was wrong. Now Phil understood that he had hurt Wilbur in not connecting with him. Now Phil understood that teenager should *not* be involved in adult wars.

Because Tommy was sitting next to him on top of a very high roof, and he didn't have wings. Tommy couldn't catch himself if he fell, and Phil had a sickening fear that Tommy wouldn't want to.

Especially after what Schlatt and Tubbo had told him. *Time travel. Phil killing Wilbur.*

Just thinking about it made Phil want to rip his own feathers out.

He needed to say something. He needed to prove to his son that he loved him. He couldn't make the same mistake he made with Wilbur. He needed to promise Tommy that he would save Wilbur, that he would be there for Tommy, that he wouldn't screw up like the last time.

He had already apologized, but that wasn't nearly enough to express what Phil wanted to express to Tommy, his youngest, the one who had endured *so much* while Phil just sat on the sidelines.

But how could he possibly put that into words? How could Phil possibly explain that?

After about an hour of Phil being a coward and just sitting silently with Tommy, who didn't seem to want to talk *at all*, Phil finally took a deep breath.

"I'm going to make things right," he promised, causing Tommy to look up at him in surprise, "I'll make sure things are better this time, or I'll die trying."

Tommy laughed humorlessly, and Phil couldn't ignore the way it felt like a needle in his chest.

"I think it might be too late for that," Tommy muttered, looking back over the view of Manberg.

"There's always hope," Phil promised, "And I swear, this time I'll be there. This time you won't have to go it alone."

For whatever reason, this only caused Tommy to wrap his arms around himself and look away.

Phil got a ping on his communicator, and he glanced down to see a new message from Tubbo.

Tubbo: Is he alright?

Tubbo: Tell him to come down so that I can give him Clementine.

Tubbo: Tell him that Clementine needs him for emotional support

Who the hell was Clementine? Was she Tommy's girlfriend? Somehow Phil doubted that Tommy had a girlfriend, but anything was possible, he supposed.

"Tubbo tells me to tell you that Clementine needs you for emotional support," Phil said slowly, looking at his son to gauge his reaction, "Who's Clementine?"

Tommy straightened, scowling indignantly. "*Clementine*," he said, "Is a very good girl and is keeping an eye on Tubbo for me because he needs her more than I do."

Yeah, that really only created more questions than answers.

"So... is she your friend?" Phil asked.

Tommy huffed. "I hope so," he muttered, "Man's best friend and all that."

Oh. Phil remembered seeing a dog loyally following Tubbo around. That dog must be Clementine. Mystery solved. No girlfriends yet.

"Oh," Phil said, "She's a dog."

Tommy rolled his eyes. "Well that's a very rude thing for you to say, Phil," he said, "Imagine if I were talking about you, and I said 'oh, he's a hybrid' like that's the only thing important about you."

Phil held back a laugh, but he couldn't stop the smile forming on his face. "You're right, sorry, mate."

He glanced back at his communicator. "But why does Tubbo want you to have her so bad?"

Tommy shrugged. “Probably because she’s technically a gift that Tubbo gave to me. ‘Therapy’ or something like that. But Tubbo needs therapy too, so I told Clementine to follow him around for a bit.”

Prime, that was so damn pure that Phil had to stop himself from enveloping his son in a hug then and there.

“We can get Tubbo his own therapy dog,” Phil said, “Just because Tubbo’s also hurting doesn’t mean you don’t need help as well.”

Tommy scowled and crossed his arms across his chest. “I’m fine.”

Yeah, somehow Phil doubted that they would be having a conversation on a roof if Tommy was just ‘fine.’

“Okay,” Phil said, carefully standing up, “Come on, you should eat breakfast.”

Tommy looked away. “I’m not hungry.”

“Well I am,” Phil said simply, “And I’d really rather not leave you alone on this roof. Besides, Tubbo seems worried.”

Tommy huffed, but he allowed Phil to pull him to his feet.

Phil quickly shot Tubbo a message on the communicator.

Phil: Messaged delivered. We’re coming down. Meet us in the kitchen.

Phil tried to convince Tommy to grab onto him while he flew down, but there was no way in hell that was happening. Tommy could climb down just as well, thank you very much, so they compromised with Phil hovering underneath Tommy while he climbed down into the window Tommy climbed out of earlier.

Like Tommy knew he could, Tommy successfully got himself inside, and Phil followed, latching the window shut behind them.

It was warmer inside. Tommy couldn’t decide if he found it comforting or stifling. Maybe a little bit of both.

He wasn’t sure what to think of Phil’s newfound “good parenting,” or whatever Tommy should call it. Tommy wanted to believe that Phil would be different, that Phil would be there, that things would change for the better...

But it was really damn difficult, so you’ll have to forgive Tommy if he was holding Phil at about an arm’s length.

Phil hadn’t tried to push the matter too much, so Tommy could find it within himself to appreciate *that*, at the very least.

They entered the kitchen, where Tubbo and Fundy were making something that smelled *delicious*. The countertops also looked a bit like a bomb shell full of flour went off, and Tommy had no doubt that Fundy was doing most of the productive cooking. Tubbo was a bit of a disaster when it came to making food sometimes. Tommy remembered that one time when Tubbo had tried to make gingerbread, now that had been pretty funny.

Schlatt and Quackity were discussing something at the countertop farthest away from Tubbo and Fundy, seemingly pointing at a sheet of paper.

However, the first person Tommy was greeted by was none other than Clementine herself. She left Tubbo's side to run up to Tommy almost straight after Tommy stepped into the room.

Tommy laughed, crouching down to sink his fingers into Clementine's soft fur.

"Did you miss me?"

Clementine huffed excitedly, and Tommy took that as a yes, which would make sense because everyone loved Tommy. How could Clementine *not* miss him, really?

"*Nobody misses you,*" Dream had said to him one day, sounding pitying, "*They're all happy that you're gone.*"

Tommy shut his eyes and forced himself to push the memory aside. Dream could keep his stupid opinions to himself.

Dream knew best, Dream was only trying to protect him, Dream was generous, Dream let him speak to Techno—

Shut. Up.

Tommy sat down, not caring that he was technically in the middle of the kitchen floor, and Clementine sat in his lap.

"Did you take good care of Tubbo?"

Another yes, Tommy was assuming. Tommy petted Clementine with more fervor. It was grounding. It helped him ignore the crap that was going on his head.

"Good girl."

"Tommy!" Tubbo cheered, running up to him, "Fundy's making pancakes."

Tommy blinked. "Didn't you already have breakfast?" he asked.

Tubbo nodded. "This is *second breakfast*," he said, like it was a term everyone should know, "A vital part of everyone's day."

"Like hobbits?" Phil asked, walking deeper into the kitchen.

"What the hell are hobbits?" Tommy demanded, not getting up from his spot on the floor.

Phil shrugged. “Just some fantasy race in a book series,” he said, “It’s a bit of a tricky read. I’d be surprised if either of you have read it.”

Tommy squawked indignantly. “I’ll have you know that I can read many things!” He carefully set Clementine to the side before jumping to his feet. “Get me those books and I’ll show *you!*”

Phil laughed. “Okay,” he said, “I’ll see if I can’t track them down.”

Tommy glanced at Schlatt, who had looked up from his conversation with Quackity. Suddenly, the communicator in Tommy’s pocket felt like it was burning against his leg.

Well, better do it now before Schlatt got even *more* angry. Still, Tommy couldn’t stop the growing tide of trepidation that rose up within him.

Tommy walked over to Schlatt, clenching his fists to hide the shaking in his hands. He pulled the communicator out of his pocket, holding it out to Schlatt.

“Um... here,” Tommy said awkwardly, staring at the ground, “I’m sorry for taking it. It was wrong of me, and I will accept any punishment you think is necessary.”

Tommy glanced up from the floor to Schlatt, who smiled, shrugged, and took the communicator from Tommy’s hand perfectly calmly.

What the hell.

“It’s pretty understandable,” Schlatt said calmly, “Obviously, I’d prefer that you not run off with it and climb onto the roof next time, but I don’t mind if you want to borrow my communicator.”

Tommy didn’t understand. He had *stolen* Schlatt’s communicator. This was Schlatt’s chance to show his true colors, to punish Tommy, to yell at him at the very least.

Schlatt was looking down at the screen. He frowned, and Tommy felt himself tense up.

“Though, maybe we can hold out on calling both of your abusers next time,” he said.

Judging by his face, Quackity would’ve spat out his drink if he had one. “You did *what?*” he demanded, looking at Tommy incredulously.

Tommy flinched and scowled. “I can call who I want.”

“This is less about what you want and more about your mental health,” Schlatt said, shoving his communicator into his pocket.

“I’m not *broken*,” Tommy snarled, “I’m not crazy.”

“He never said you were,” Quackity said calmly, “Just that you’ve been through a lot, and talking to the people who’ve hurt you will probably not help you recover.”

Tommy glanced at the floor. He supposed Quackity sort of had a point. But...

“Dream let me speak to Techno,” he said quietly.

There was a small pause that was promptly interrupted by Fundy.

“Hey Tommy, can I get a hand with these pancakes?!” he called out from across the decently large kitchen.

Finally, an escape.

“Uh, yeah big man!”

Tommy practically *sprinted* to where Fundy was flipping pancakes on the griddle. Tubbo was already there, looking simultaneously relieved and concerned about something. Phil walked over to Schlatt and Quackity, who were still staring at the map on the table. Upon seeing Phil, Schlatt actually picked up the map, and all three of them left the room.

Tommy decided that just this once, he was going to ignore it. He was hungry, okay? He just wanted to eat these pancakes.

Fundy began stacking a colossal pile of pancakes on top of the plates both Tubbo and Fundy were holding.

“Y’know,” Fundy said passive aggressively, “You could’ve told me about this time travel things sooner.”

Tubbo and Tommy winced.

“Yeah,” Tubbo admitted, “I think we were originally going to keep it more on the down low, but it didn’t exactly work out that way.”

“Were you ever going to tell me?” Fundy asked, pouring new batter onto the griddle, “Or were you just going to keep me in the dark the entire time?”

Tommy shifted uncomfortably. Was it wrong that he had no clue what the answer to that question was? Would he have chosen to tell Fundy about the situation? Probably eventually, right? Wilbur *was* his father after all.

“I think we would’ve told you,” Tommy said, “Eventually.”

Fundy scowled. “Eventually? It wouldn’t have killed you to tell me as soon as you could that my father was going to blow up the country and get my grandfather to kill him? You can’t hide that sort of thing from me!”

Tubbo set his plate of pancakes down on the counter with a small clink. “Fundy...” Tubbo began, “things are just complicated.”

“Things are always complicated,” Fundy snarled, “So don’t give me that diplomatic crap.”

Fundy was blowing this way out of proportion.

“What do you want us to say, Fundy?” Tommy asked, putting his own plate down, “Because I could tell you that we were trying to spare your feelings. Would that make you feel better?”

Fundy scowled at sizzling pancake on the griddle. “I don’t need you guys to treat me like a child.”

Tubbo sighed, running his fingers through his hair. “Honestly, Fundy, we have no idea what we’re doing. The only people we’ve told so far are Technoblade, Quackity, Phil, and you. And in all the cases except for Phil’s, we had to tell them because they had heard too much.”

“Is that supposed to make me feel better?” Fundy demanded, flipping the pancake with the spatula, “I deserved to know immediately, not just when you have no other choice.”

“Oh yeah, like that would’ve gone well,” Tommy said sarcastically, “You would’ve just said we were making it up or something like that.”

“Don’t make stuff up, Tommy.” “You’re being ridiculous.”

Fundy scoffed. “Oh yeah? Just admit you were too afraid to tell me the truth.”

Tubbo raised his hands placatingly. “Fundy I know you’re feeling a little hurt right now, but none of this is Tommy’s—”

“Are you kidding me?!” Fundy shouted, gesturing violently at Tommy, “*All* of this is Tommy’s fault!”

Tommy flinched and stumbled backward, hardly believing what he was hearing.

Tubbo scowled. “That’s not—”

“He’s been with Wilbur this *entire time!*” Fundy screamed, “He could’ve stopped him! He could’ve done *something*. Wilbur *loves* him, Wilbur *adores* him, Wilbur would’ve *listened* to him!”

“Are you hearing yourself?!” Tubbo shouted back, “Wilbur has been abusing Tommy, why are you jealous of him?!”

Jealous? Fundy wasn’t jealous. Fundy was just stating the truth. Tommy *was* there; Tommy *should’ve* done something.

But instead he had just let his brother descend into madness. Instead he had let Techno get stabbed. Instead he was standing in this kitchen with a dog while everyone else was—

“Tommy?” Tubbo said softly, “Are you with us?”

Tommy snapped himself out of his spiral. Something was brushing against his leg, and Tommy looked down to see Clementine looking up at Tommy worriedly. Come to think of it, could dogs even get worried?

“I’m fine,” Tommy said brusquely, “And you’re right, Fundy. Most of this is—”

“Don’t,” Tubbo interrupted, giving Fundy a glare.

Fundy sighed. “You’re right,” he said, “That was wrong of me. I didn’t mean any of it, Tommy, I’ve just been having some... unresolved emotions lately.”

Tommy nodded sagely. “I can understand that,” he said. And he could, even if his problems weren’t as bad as Fundy’s. At least *his* father had never shouted at him, saying that he was a traitor.

There was an awkward silence. Tommy could smell smoke.

“Is something burning?” he asked, balling his hands into fists.

Fundy swore. “The pancakes!”

That particular batch was pretty unsalvageable. That was okay, though, because the rest were perfectly edible.

They threw away the bad batch. If Tommy were poetic, he would’ve compared the burnt pancakes to the argument he and Fundy just had, and they were throwing it away. No more hard feelings.

But that sounded really cliché or cheesy or something dumb like that, so it was a good thing that Tommy wasn’t poetic.

Chapter End Notes

I'm so tired so these notes are going to be uninformative.

Except that Fundy has problems too would you look at that.

I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading! <3

First Strike

Chapter Summary

Techno kills a man.

A man maims Techno.

Who is the man?

Chapter Notes

Tw: blood, injury, manipulation, abandonment issues, death sorta, chaos chat, dream, wilbur,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade wasn't mad. And he had long surpassed furious.

He was *feral*.

KILL HIM WITH FIRE. FILE A RESTRAINING ORDER. BEAT HIM TO DEATH. STICK HIM IN A PRISON AND THEN BEAT HIM TO DEATH. TORTURE HIM FOR ETERNITY. WITH RAW POTATOES. RAW POTATOES ARE TOO KIND. POISONED POTATOES.

"You *monster*," Techno snarled at Dream, "That is my *brother*—"

"Careful Techno," Dream said casually, pocketing his communicator, "You're starting to sound like Wilbur."

LOW BLOW. WE SOUND NOTHING LIKE WILBUR. WILBUR HAS THAT FANCY ACENT. IT'S NOT THAT FANCY. WE ARE FREE OF THE FANCINESS.

Techno rolled his eyes. "Y'know, that's not so bad over *sending my little brother my fucking finger*," he said, "And don't tell me that was Wilbur. Wilbur thinks Tommy's in a prison cell."

Dream hummed, tilting his head. "I mean, *yeah*," he admitted, "But you can't deny that it was a pretty effective way of grabbing his attention."

GRABBING HIS ATTENTION? YOU TRAUMATIZED HIM. I mean, he was already traumatized. YOU DOUBLE TRAUMATIZED HIM. TRIPLE. QUADRUPLE. QUINT—

Techno tuned out his chat as they continued raising the number and gave Dream the worst glare he could come up with. It would probably strike most men dead. Sadly, Dream did *not* drop dead. Shame.

“I know what you’re doing,” he hissed, “I know why you let him talk to me.”

*Ooooooh?? **Do tell Techno-Sensei.***

Dream’s lips quirked upward. “Oh?” he asked, “And why’s that?”

Technoblade would give anything to see Dream’s head rolling on the floor right about now.

“You’re manipulating him,” Techno began.

“I’m always manipulating him,” Dream said, with a tone similar to someone who just rolled their eyes.

*DON’T INTERRUPT TECHNO-SENSEI. **YOU HAVE LOST YOUR HONOR. WE NOW EXILE YOU FROM YOUR OWN COUNTRY. YOU CANNOT RETURN UNLESS YOU CAPTURE GOOD MORALS. YOU LIKELY SHALL NEVER RETURN. GOOD.***

If Techno weren’t so *damn* mad at Dream, he probably would’ve snorted at the Chat’s antics. They certainly knew how to completely destroy the tension.

“You didn’t let me finish.” Techno leaned forward so that he could look maybe a little more intimidating toward Dream. Probably didn’t work, but a man had to keep up appearances. “You’re bribing him, so to speak. You’re making him believe that if he keeps calling you, you’ll let him speak to me.”

*OH, THAT MAKES SENSE. **WANT TO PUNT A GREEN BOY.***

Dream chuckled. “You’re reading into things,” he said, “I was just being nice. Is that illegal or something? I thought you didn’t believe in laws.”

“I do believe in human decency, contrary to popular belief,” Techno said, still radiating rage, “And you seem to be lacking in that particular department.”

“Don’t act all high and mighty.” Dream frowned. “You aren’t much better yourself. Honestly, I can’t believe you didn’t realize that Wilbur was abusing Tommy right under your nose.”

Much to his annoyance, Techno winced. Logically, he knew Dream was just trying to get a rise out of him, but the words still felt like a punch in the face. Because they were true, unfortunately.

*DON’T LISTEN TO HIM. **STAY STRONG TECHNO-CHAN.***

“And he thought you knew,” Dream continued, smiling widely, “He thought you were standing by, watching as the person he trusted most tore down his barriers, hurt him, and—”

“Shut up,” Techno growled, “You shut your damn mouth, or I’ll do it for you.”

YOU SAID IT. PUT A PICKAXE THROUGH HIS TEETH. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

Dream shrugged, looking entirely unconcerned. “Okay,” he said, “I know when I’m not wanted.”

He started heading toward the door. “Wilbur seems pretty stressed,” he noted, “I’d prepare yourself.”

He re-gagged Technoblade, left, leaving the door slightly cracked behind him in the most unsatisfying manner possible.

YOU CAN'T EVEN SLAM A DOOR RIGHT. ONE DAY WE'LL SLAM THE DOOR IN YOUR FACE. IT WILL BE EXHILIRATING. WE WILL LITERALLY SLAM IT INTO YOUR FACE. IT WILL HURT. THAT IS THE GOAL.

Techno ignored Chat's fairly decent if not impractical ideas for something far more important.

Dream had left the door cracked. Dream had left the door *open*. Why would he do that? Was he mocking Techno, thinking that Techno wasn't able to move? Was he laying a trap of sorts?

It didn't matter. What *mattered* is that Techno had a way *out*. And if Techno didn't call that an opportunity, then he wasn't the blade.

YOU SHALL ALWAYS BE THE BLADE. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE IT. BUT YOU CAN ESCAPE THIS PRISON. MAYBE KILL DREAM ALONG THE WAY. OK, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO FINDS THIS SUS?

Alas, that one reasonable voice had a point. This was *incredibly* suspicious. Beyond suspicious, really. Dream had never failed to close the door behind him before. It was really villain 101. Don't leave the door cracked when it's the door to your only prisoner. Especially when your prisoner is highly proficient in everything.

*Well, maybe not EVERYTHING. **YEAH, REMEMBER THAT ONE TIME YOU TRIED TO PLAY THE GUITAR.** WILBUR LOOKED LIKE HIS SOUL WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE HIS BODY. **I DON'T KNOW, WILBUR LOOKED A LOT HAPPIER WHEN HIS SOUL ACTUALLY LEFT HIS BODY. TOO SOON.***

Techno really wanted to tell his chat for quite possibly the hundred-thousandth time to *shut up, if you don't mind*, but sadly he was gagged, and talking through cloth was not actually what one would call comfortable, and also if he didn't take this window while it lasted then Techno would be a disgrace to his own name.

There was just one issue.

Techno was kind of bound at the feet.

PRESS F FOR RESPECTS. *F.F*

One of these days, Techno was just going to drown his chat in lava. Don't ask him how, he hadn't worked out the logistics yet, but one of these days, the Chat was going to rue the day they ever decided to scream the letter 'F' inside his brain.

*YOU CAN TRY. MUAHAHHAHA. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THE CHAOS. **BUT YOU CAN ESCAPE THE CELL. PLEASE STOP SITTING AND ESCAPE THE CELL. PLEASE.***

Right, focus.

Techno looked at his feet, seeing if there was any way he could possibly loosen the ropes. Currently, the answer was a hard no. He supposed he could attempting to kick around a bunch, but Techno had a feeling that would only serve to tire him out and waste time.

Jumping was right out.

*JUMP. **HOP LIKE A BUNNY RABBIT. TECHNOBOUNCE.***

Yeah, jumping was *right* out.

*SLITHER LIKE A SNAKE. **SNEK. HISSSSSSSS***

No, he was *not slithering* like a snake. God, Chat, where did you get these ideas?

*THEY COME FROM THE GREAT BEYOND. **THE GREAT BEYOND.***

So, Techno did the only thing a man can do when his legs were tied and jumping was right out and there was no way in hell he was going to be caught *slithering like a snake*.

He got on his knees and crawled.

Did it serve to get him across the room? Yes. Was it uncomfortable? Definitely. Was it making Chat cackle like the chaos demons they were? Oh, absolutely.

*TECHNOCRAWL. **LOOK AT HIM GO. LIKE A PENGUIN. LIKE TOMMY WHEN HE WAS ONE.***

Was it sneaky? God, no.

Honestly, Techno was surprised that nobody had come rushing into the room by the time he had inelegantly reached the door. And no, it was not pleasant surprise. It was "incredibly suspicious surprise, but he'll take it because there wasn't much else he could do" surprise.

*WE'VE MADE IT TO THE DOOR. **WHAT NEXT. WHO DO YOU THINK WE ARE CORTONA? SURELY SOMEONE HAS A BRIGHT IDEA.***

Yeah, the bright idea was to listen for anyone walking by. It wasn't exactly the first time Techno had attempted sneaking around, Chat. He wasn't an amateur.

*True. **I DON'T KNOW, YOU KINDA GOT STABBED LIKE A NERD.** Also true.*

Techno wasn't even sure why he was trying anymore.

The good news was that nobody was coming his way. So, Techno was probably safe to creep out the door very loudly and noisily. Maybe if he was lucky he would find a sword lying around. Wouldn't that be nice?

*That, Technoblade, would be called plot convenience. **WE DO NOT APPROVE OF THINGS DROPPING INTO OUR LAPS. OKAY BUT WHAT DO YOU CALL THE DOOR? INCREDIBLY SUSPICIOUS.***

If Chat mentioned the suspiciousness of this situation *one more time*, Techno was going to find the nearest sword, undo his bindings, and stab them.

*You can try. **CAN WE STOP SITTING AROUND AND MOVE IT ALREADY?***

Techno nodded. Though, the sword idea wasn't half bad. Maybe if he could get one... well, one thing at a time.

Techno slowly opened the door, cringing when it made an *incredibly* loud squeaking sound. Honestly, why is it that everything got twenty-times louder when one was trying to *sneak* around.

*CUE THE MISSION IMPOSSIBLE THEME. **DUN, DUN, dun, dun, dun, DUN DUN, dun, dun, dun. DO DO DO.***

Technoblade hated that he was actually getting into this very poorly sung theme music as he shuffled into the hall, looking both ways. It was catchy, okay?

Shush, I hear footsteps.

Technoblade froze. Sure enough, footsteps were coming toward him. If he was lucky, it was Wilbur. Well... lucky was strong, but *luckier*. Wilbur was easier to handle due to his general instability. His movements were a lot less calculated, which meant Wilbur would be more prone to error.

CAN YOU STOP SITTING THERE FOR THE LOVE OF ALL THAT IS HOLY.

Technoblade continued shuffling on his knees down the unfamiliar hall, away from the footsteps. Hopefully this led him to an exit.

*Hopefully the exit doesn't have stairs. **We did not think this through.***

Listen, Techno didn't like this embarrassing mode of walking either, but it was all he had, so he would appreciate it if the Chat would *stop talking*.

The footsteps were getting closer. Techno thought it might be prudent to turn around so that he can properly face his attacker. This turned out to be a good idea, as Wilbur was walking right into view.

He didn't look too good. His hair was even *more* messy than before, and he looked as though he had a fight with a wall, if his split knuckles were anything to go by.

Understandable. Wilbur wasn't exactly being *discrete* when he shouted for Tommy to get off the roof. Techno panicked when he heard though too, so he could relate.

When he saw Techno, Wilbur froze.

"What the hell..." Wilbur began, looking dumbstruck. His face hardened. "How did you get out?"

DEUS EX MACHINA. SUS CIRCUMSTANCES. THE WILL OF PRIME.

Techno shrugged.

Wilbur snarled and began running forward, reaching into his trench coat. There was a flash of silver, and something was flying straight toward him.

KNIFE.

Techno lifted his arms up to meet the knife's path, and it landed right in the thick rope bindings. Wilbur's eyes widened in surprise, but Techno was too busy pulling his wrists away from each other. The rope split open, *finally* releasing his wrists.

LET'S GO. THE LOOK ON HIS FACE. Ugh, rope burn. KICK HIS BUTT.

The knife clattered onto the ground, and Techno snatched it up with his right hand while he painfully ripped his gag out with his left.

Wilbur was already running toward him, pulling out a genuine sword. Techno rolled out of the way as Wilbur aimed a genuine slice toward him. As he rolled, he kicked his legs up and sliced through their bindings with the knife.

The cut wasn't as precise as he'd like. Turned out holding a knife with one missing finger was strange and difficult. Didn't matter.

What mattered is that Technoblade jumped to his *feet* for the first time in *days*.

And then immediately stumbled.

Lol, fail. TECHNOSTUMBLE. YOU'RE BETTER THAN THIS.

Wilbur let out a frustrated growl, aiming a sword stroke toward Techno's leg. Techno dodged toward Wilbur and aimed a knife stroke toward Wilbur's neck. Wilbur dodged out of the way.

HIT HIM ON THE HEAD. KILL HIM. BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD.

Techno may have been stuck in a prison for a week, but Wilbur had been smoking cigarettes and deteriorating for just as long, so he really didn't stand a chance.

In one smooth motion, Techno swept down and kicked Wilbur's legs out from under him. His sword fell to the ground with a clatter.

BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

Techno pinned Wilbur to the ground, breathing heavily. He held the edge of his knife to Wilbur's throat.

*THE MOMENT WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR, **KILL HIM, DO IT NOW, DO IT,** BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD*

Wilbur smiled, not looking at all afraid. "Are you going to kill me, Techno?" he asked, looking like he had half a mind to laugh.

Blood, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD

It would be so easy to just slit Wilbur's throat here and now. And after everything Wilbur's done? It would even be justified. There was absolutely *no* reason for Techno not to end it now.

A single tear rolled down Wilbur's cheek as he breathed out, "It doesn't quite matter anymore, since Tommy seems to be about ready to throw himself off a roof anyway."

Tommy.

And as Techno watched the tear roll off of Wilbur's face, Techno forced back the angered cries for blood as a memory suddenly intruded upon his thoughts.

"He needs help," Tommy had pleaded the day he had finally escaped Pogtopia, "Not a sword through the gut."

And as Techno stared at Wilbur's sad, accepting, yet still completely *deranged* face, Techno suddenly remembered those few sparring matches Wilbur and Techno had done all those years ago. When Techno would beat him again and again, and eventually Wilbur laughed and said, *"I'm not good enough for this anyway."*

Damnit memory.

Technoblade lifted the knife off of Wilbur's throat, and Wilbur's eyes widened, his face hardening back into a glare.

"What are you doing?" he demanded.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?? YOU HAVE HIM RIGHT THERE. JUST KILL HIM NOW. SCREW HAPPY MEMORIES TOMMY WILL COME TO FORGIVE YOU. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE ANYMORE LIMBS.

"I'm not going to kill you, Wilbur," Techno said gruffly, "Stay down and I won't hurt you at all."

Techno moved to stand up, and Wilbur let out a guttural scream, jumping up and slamming Techno into the ground. Techno let out a startled grunt.

*SEE THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T KILL THE MAN. **HONESTLY.** I don't know Techno might be right.*

“What the hell is wrong with you?” Wilbur demanded, more tears escaping his eyes. “What is wrong with *everyone*?”

*MAD MAN IS NOW A SAD MAN. **HE ALSO LOOKS READY FOR MURDER.***

Techno had *never* seen Wilbur like this. Not recently at least. When was the last time Techno had seen him cry?

“I don't know, Wilbur,” Techno said tiredly, “Maybe we're just trying to help you.”

Wilbur screwed up his face in anger. “Stop *lying!*” He moved to grab the sword off the ground.

Techno kicked his knee up into Wilbur's abdomen. Wilbur shouted out in pain, instinctively moving away from Techno. Techno jumped back to his feet, spun his knife around, and hit the pommel of his knife against Wilbur's skull.

Wilbur collapsed onto the ground.

*KILL HIM PLEASE. **GET HIM THERAPY. INCARCERATE HIM.***

For a small moment, the only sound in the room was Techno's breathing as he tried to comprehend what just happened.

Technoblade didn't even get to *think* about what had just happened, however, because slow clapping began reverberating in the hall. Technoblade spun around.

Dream was leaning against the wall of the hallway, still clapping slowly. A sick smirk was on his face.

BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD—

This time, Techno could agree whole heartedly, flipping the knife back around and taking aim

“What a good sho—”

Dream was interrupted as the knife landed in his heart with a *schtick*. Dream looked down at the knife and let out a small chuckle. Techno took vindictive pleasure in the blood that dribbled out of his mouth.

Dream collapsed to the ground.

*YESSSS. **DREAM'S DEAD CRABRAVE. FINALLY. ONE DOWN TWO TO GO.** A too merciful end if you ask me.*

Techno didn't waste time to celebrate. Dream's bed was probably nearby, and Techno really *couldn't* afford to wait around.

Techno stooped over Dream's body, twisted the knife, and yanked it out.

He hesitated at Wilbur's body. Should he take him back? While that would probably be ideal, it would be a hinderance. Techno was trying to get away for pete's sake.

Still...

Technoblade searched Wilbur's pockets, and sure enough, he found Tommy's communicator. He glanced at his coordinates and instantly typed them down, sending them to Schlatt, who he was making the executive decision to trust. He then deleted the message.

Then, Techno *ran*.

Which was a bit of an issue, because this place turned out to be a freaking *labyrinth*.

WHERE'S MAGIC STRING WHEN YOU NEED IT. WHY CAN'T WE LEAVE.

Techno made another sharp turn and was relieved to find stairs that seemed to be going *upward*. Finally.

Techno instantly scrambled up them, suddenly aware that some of his adrenaline was wearing off. Some of his bruises and cuts were starting to ache again, and he could feel fresh ones from where Wilbur had slammed him against the ground.

It didn't matter. He just had to keep going up these stairs.

UP THE STAIRS WE GO. AND THEN INTO THE TUNNEL.

There'd better not be a tunnel at the top of those stairs. Techno had better see the sky when he gets up to the top of the stairs.

Some god must've been watching from above or something, because he saw the sky. It was the night sky, but it was better than nothing, and Techno was going to take it.

FREEDOM. WE'RE FREE. YESSSS. LOOK A DOG.

Technoblade looked at the dog the Chat was referring to. It was really just a wolf that one would find in any forest, but it was staring at Techno strangely, so there was that.

Technoblade couldn't really afford to focus on some dog, though; he really needed to get *out*

—

Techno let out a gasp as an arrow painfully imbedded itself into his leg, causing Techno to fall forward.

KEEP GOING. DON'T LET A MESELY ARROW TAKE DOWN THE MIGHTY TECHNOBLADE.

Techno moved to pull himself back to his feet and face his attacker, but he was slammed face first into the dirt before he could get an inch off the ground.

“Did you have fun, Techno?” Dream whispered, gripping Techno by his braid, “Because I’m going to tell you a little secret.”

Techno refused to say anything as Dream painfully pulled his braid backward.

“You did exactly what I wanted you to,” Dream snarled, “With the exception of the dying part, of course.”

Techno could practically *hear* Dream’s smile.

“I hope you didn’t mind losing a finger, because this is going to hurt a *whole lot* more.”

Blinding pain, screaming, and the world went black.

Chapter End Notes

Sorry not sorry.

The lore streams were killing me so i decided to kill you. (:

Honestly you should be thanking me, I took away one of Dream's canon lives. You should really be grateful. (lol, be grateful to someone on discord i wasn't originally going to do it)

Watch out Wilbur, your redemption is actually beginning to show.

What's going to happen next? Guess we'll have to wait and see.

Anyway, thank you for reading, i hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments! <3

Gogy Wake Up

Chapter Summary

Plans are made, George is talked to, there is a dog.

Chapter Notes

Tw: discussion of violence, implied/referenced child abuse, manipulation, some blood, mentioned amputation

THIS CHAPTER WAS WRITTEN IN MARCH 2021.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Schlatt ushered Quackity and Phil back into his office, far away from where the kids could overhear them.

The message on the communicator was from an hour ago, and frankly, it was a miracle Tommy hadn't seen it. Or not. When Tommy had first been exiled, he had kept spamming Schlatt with swear-words and insults and what-not, so Schlatt had put him on 'do not disturb' for the sake of Schlatt's sanity. Schlatt was now eternally grateful for this one thing past-him decided to do. If Tommy had seen the message, the results could have been disastrous.

Now, however, Schlatt, Phil, Quackity, and whoever else got involved in this just needed to keep Tommy and Tubbo out of the know. Should be easy enough.

Well, no, it really wouldn't be that easy, but that was besides point.

"What's going on?" Phil asked, leaning against the wall and crossing his arms.

Quackity stuffed his hands into his pockets and started swaying on his feet. "Um... Tommy's communicator sent us -well, Schlatt, technically— coordinates."

Phil's eyes widened. "What?" he said, his face hardened, "Well then, what are we waiting for?"

Schlatt sighed, resting his head in one of his hands. "It could easily be a trap. We can't rush into this."

Phil's wings twitched and his face contorted in such a way that Schlatt expected him to reply in anger. To his surprise (and immense relief), Phil sagged, nodding.

"Yeah, you're right," he muttered, taking his hat off and running his fingers in his hair, "What have you done so far?"

Phil was willing to work with Schlatt. That was good. That would make things immensely simpler from here on out.

"We've already got scouts in the area," Schlatt muttered, staring down at the map that they had spread across the table, "They haven't reported anything particularly unique about it."

"There has to be *something* there," Quackity remarked drawing an 'x' on top of the exact coordinates, "Maybe they've missed something."

"Unless, of course, the coordinates are a rendezvous," Phil pointed out, "Techno might've already been on the move."

Schlatt massaged his temple. "We can't even be sure it was Technoblade," he muttered, "Dream or Wilbur could be trying to trip us up."

Quackity was glancing down at his communicator, his face paling significantly. "The scouts found something."

Schlatt had a bad feeling about this.

"What?" Phil asked, desperation bleeding into his voice, "What did they find?"

Quackity stared at Phil, looking horrified. "Um... they... they saw Dream cutting off Techno's arm."

Nausea and horror churned in Schlatt's stomach, and Phil looked as though someone had stabbed him.

"*What?*" Phil whispered hoarsely.

"His *arm*?" Schlatt asked Quackity, "They *saw* Dream cutting it off?"

Quackity looked like he wanted to puke. Schlatt understood the feeling. "They were hiding," he said, "Apparently, he cut off his braid as well."

Phil let out a low moan.

"Of course," Schlatt muttered, "And this is in the same area as the coordinates that have been just broadcasted to us?"

Quackity nodded. "Really close to the coordinates, actually."

Phil's eyes glinted, and he pushed himself off of the wall, standing at his full height. "We need to get him out," he said firmly, "We need to get Wilbur too. We know where they are,

now all we need to do is make a plan.”

Schlatt frowned. “So what I’m gathering from this is that Technoblade must’ve tried to escape,” he mused, “Thus sending the message to me, and Dream caught up and cut his arm off.”

Phil let out another strangled sound at the mention.

“That sounds like something Techno would do,” Phil said, “The sending the message thing. Not only was it a fail-safe for if he didn’t manage to escape, but it also would be a simple way to raid their base after Techno got out.”

“Yes,” Schlatt said, “Well, now we need to figure out how to get *inside* said base. Quackity, did the scouts see where Dream went after that?”

Quackity shook his head. “He used invis.”

Schlatt swore. Why couldn’t anything be easy?

Phil bristled. “I can storm the place myself,” he said, starting to head toward the door.

“You’re going to storm the place you don’t know the entrance to?” Schlatt asked dryly, “And then fight against Dream and Wilbur single-handedly?”

Phil’s wings fluffed slightly. If Schlatt had to guess, it was from irritation. Schlatt was very good at irritating people.

“I’ll figure it out,” he said coldly, “It’s better than just sitting around and speculating, like you seem to want.”

“I’m just being cautious,” Schlatt said calmly, “Dream is a master manipulator, and he knows exactly how to manipulate a situation to his advantage. We need to make sure that any plan we make won’t unintentionally make anything worse.”

Phil raised his eyebrows. “We are making a plan, though,” he confirmed.

Schlatt nodded. “Of course,” he said brusquely, “I owe Technoblade for helping Tommy and Tubbo escape. It would be pretty terrible of me to not return the favor.”

Listen, Tubbo was tired.

He was tired for a lot of reasons. Wars, presidencies, fractured friendships, nightmares, etc.

But one thing he was *incredibly* tired of was being treated like he was a child.

And maybe that made him sound like Tommy, but Tubbo wasn’t even sure he cared.

He was a part of this government. He was literally the *Secretary of State*, and Schlatt was deliberately keeping him out of the know.

How did Tubbo know this, one might ask?

Maybe because Schlatt, Quackity, and *Phil* left the kitchen with what was obviously a *map*. Tubbo wasn't stupid. He knew they were looking for Technoblade. And while he understood why the might want to keep Tommy out of it, Tubbo couldn't understand why *Tubbo* was being excluded.

Tubbo knew that Schlatt didn't want Tubbo to be involved in the rescue, and that was fine. But Tubbo could help with the planning. He had run a country before for Pete's sake; Tubbo could *help*.

But no. Instead, Schlatt had chosen to keep Tubbo out of the loop, to keep Tubbo uninformed, like he wasn't worth it.

This was just like *Quackity* back when Tubbo was president of New L'manberg. *Quackity* making all of the calls. *Quackity* treating Tubbo like an ignorant child.

It was infuriating.

"You okay, Tubbo?" Tommy asked, his mouth full of pancakes.

Tubbo looked up at Tommy in surprise. He had almost forgotten that he wasn't alone in the room.

"Huh?" he asked.

Tommy swallowed, gesturing to Tubbo with his fork. "You kind of look like you want to burn your pancakes," he said, "What did they ever do to you?"

"Do you have a problem with my cooking?" Fundy joked.

Tubbo shook his head quickly, trying to force on a smile. "No, no, the pancakes are fine," he said, quickly jabbing at the pancake with his fork and stuffing a bite into his mouth.

"Then what's wrong?" Tommy demanded.

"Nothing!" Tubbo said in that high-pitched manner that made it clear that he was lying.

Tommy's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "*Tubbo...*"

Tubbo sighed. "Listen, I've just got something on my mind," he said, glancing back at the doors of the kitchen, "Actually, you know what?" Tubbo stood up. "I'm going to deal with it now. I'll see you later."

Tommy nodded, returning to his pancake. "Okay, don't do anything stupid."

Tubbo rolled his eyes as he walked out of the kitchen. "Don't send Clementine after me!"

“Ugh, fine!”

Tubbo sighed, shutting the door behind him. Honestly, Tommy’s insistence to pawn off Clementine to Tubbo was mildly ridiculous. Clementine was *Tommy’s* therapy dog, not Tubbo’s. Tubbo didn’t need a therapy dog. *He* wasn’t exiled, abused by his older brother, exiled *again*, and abused by Dream.

“*Don’t be an idiot,*” Tommy’s voice from this morning echoed in his head, “*It can still be... bad, you know?*”

Maybe Tommy had a point. Still, that didn’t mean that *Tommy* could just turn around and think that Tubbo needed Clementine more than he did, which was also completely untrue.

Tubbo reached the door to the office, and he stormed in. Phil, Quackity, and Schlatt were all gathered around the desk, staring at that stupid *map* again.

“Once we manage to locate the entran—” Schlatt looked up in surprise as Tubbo marched into the office. “Tubbo! What are you doing here?”

Tubbo planted his feet firmly in front of the desk, crossed his arms, and said coldly, “Why shouldn’t I be here? I’m a member of the cabinet too, last I recall.”

Schlatt sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose. “Listen, I—”

“You *what?*” Tubbo demanded, “Thought I couldn’t handle it? Thought I couldn’t help? Thought I was too young?”

“That’s not—” Quackity started, but Tubbo interrupted again.

“Then why are you guys crowding around the table like you’re forming some sort of secret organization, huh?” He gestured to the desk. “I know you’re trying to rescue Techno, and you can’t just keep me out of the loop like this, I can be helpful too, I can...”

Schlatt raised his hand placatingly, causing Tubbo to trail off. He didn’t look Schlatt’s eyes, instead electing on staring at his immaculate tie.

“Nobody is doubting your skill,” Schlatt said calmly, “but just because you *can*, doesn’t mean you should.”

This did nothing to satisfy Tubbo’s frustration. He had fought in literal *wars*, ran a country, and *now* he was being told to sit back and let the adults do the work?

“Because I’m too young?”

“Because you’re a kid,” Schlatt said calmly, “And you deserve to act like one.”

And as quickly as it came, all of Tubbo’s frustration and anger drained out of his body. “Oh,” he said dully, “That... that actually makes sense.”

It wasn't exactly what Tubbo would call *old* news. Tubbo *was* a kid, and he *should* be acting like one.

"It's just... easy to forget, I guess," Tubbo muttered, glancing at his shoes embarrassedly, "Sorry."

"No problem, man," Quackity said calmly, "I'd probably be pretty mad too if I thought I was being cast aside or something."

Phil hadn't said anything, still staring at a certain part of the map like it would solve all of his problems. Overwhelmed by curiosity, Tubbo walked closer, taking a look at the spot Phil was staring at.

There wasn't anything particularly special about it. It was just a part of the forest. The only thing that made that spot interesting was the fact that someone had drawn an 'x' on it.

"What's this?" Tubbo asked tapping his finger against the x.

Schlatt sighed. "We think that's where Technoblade is."

Surprise mixed with joy rose up in Tubbo. "Really?" he asked, "That's great! We can go and get him—"

"Not so fast," Schlatt said, shaking his head, "The *only* thing we know about is the coordinates. Everything else? Zilch, nothing."

"Nothing?" Tubbo echoed, furrowing his eyebrows, "How do you know the coordinates and not anything else?"

"Because Techno sent us the coords," Phil muttered, "He tried to escape."

Tried.

"Oh," Tubbo said, "Well, then, what's the plan?"

"We're sending Phil out to find the entrance to this place," Schlatt said, "After that, we can gather up a decent force and raid the place."

"What if Dream or Wilbur knows that you're coming?" Tubbo asked, "Or spots you? They'll leave before you guys can get there."

"Invis, mate," Phil said, still sounding preoccupied, "Nobody will know I was there. Dream won't have any reason to believe that we're coming."

"Unless, of course, someone's feeding Dream information from the inside," Quackity muttered.

Tubbo flinched. "*Do you know what happens to traitors, Tubbo?*"

“Who would do that?” Phil asked, glancing up for the first time, “I thought everyone here hated Dream.”

Quackity and Tubbo looked at each other.

“George,” they both said at the same time.

Schlatt swore.

“I should’ve thought of that sooner,” he muttered, “I’ll have to talk to George. The man’s hardly around, I almost forgot he was on the cabinet.”

“Can’t keep track of those details after all that time travel, huh?” Quackity asked light-heartedly, even though he was frowning, “Do you really think George is a traitor?”

“I mean, I don’t know...” Tubbo mused, drumming his fingers against the desk, “He’s pretty loyal to Dream, last I recall, but he’s not exactly what I would call *active* around here. I’m not sure how effective he would be in terms of feeding information.”

“It would make sense, though,” Schlatt said, “Like how Dream managed to get past our security to deliver Techno’s... you-know-what. It wasn’t Dream, it was George.”

Tubbo frowned. “I’d rather not jump to conclusions,” he said, “For all we know, George is completely innocent.”

“Okay, how about this,” Phil said, “Tubbo can talk to this George, see if there’s anything suspicious about him. Even if it isn’t him, I wouldn’t be surprised if Dream has at least one ally in this building, so we’ll just keep the plan under wraps.”

“And that way we’ll have an easier time of hiding this from Tommy,” Schlatt agreed, nodding, “Good idea, Philza.”

Phil only nodded. Tubbo stared.

“Wait... we’re not going to tell Tommy that we know where Techno is?” Tubbo asked.

Phil sighed. “Think about it, Tubbo,” he said, “He’ll only rush in and try to save Techno himself, getting hurt in the process. It’s better this way.”

Tubbo scowled. “We don’t have to tell him *where* he is,” he insisted, “But this is only going to make things worse! What if he finds out we’ve been hiding this from him? He’ll be furious.”

“If he knows he’ll find some way to steal the map or something to figure out the coordinates,” Quackity said, “It was hard enough to get the kid away from Wilbur the first time. I’d prefer not to have to do it again.”

Tubbo didn’t like this. Tubbo didn’t like this at all. Shouldn’t Tommy have the right to know that they were making progress? Shouldn’t they be giving Tommy the benefit of the doubt, trusting that he would stay put?

...knowing Tommy, if they didn't manage to rescue Techno *today*; he probably would sneak out in the dead of night.

"Fine," Tubbo bit out, "But I'd like the record to show that I don't like this one bit."

Tommy was going to be *so mad* when he found out Tubbo was hiding this from him.

Schlatt nodded, looking relieved. "Thanks, Tubbo."

Tubbo nodded shortly.

"I'll go, uh, talk to George," he muttered, turning around, "Good luck finding the entrance, Phil."

"Be careful," Phil replied.

"I will," Tubbo said simply, leaving the room and shutting the door behind him.

Tubbo decided that he wasn't going to go through the effort of searching for George manually, so he shot him a message asking for coordinates. George supplied them, which was how Tubbo found himself sitting in front of George outside of a coffee shop, George sipping an incredibly large looking mug of Coffee.

"Sorry," George said, yawning loudly, "I just... had a very late night."

Tubbo frowned, shifting uncomfortably. "Yeah?" he asked, trying to sound casual, "Why's that?"

George shrugged. "Dream—" Tubbo's heart skipped a beat. "—wanted me to deliver something to Tommy as soon as he was up and about again. I didn't think much of it, so—"

"Wait a moment," Tubbo interrupted, "You're working with Dream?"

George frowned. "I think *working* with him is a bit strong," he said, "But he's my friend, you know? He asked for a favor, and honestly, it was just a small snack. Why?"

Tubbo's stomach churned at Techno's finger being referred to as a snack.

"Um, did-did you happen to look *inside* the box by any chance?"

George shook his head. "Dream said it's one of those things that have to be eaten instantly after the box was opened; I had to keep it in the freezer too. But like I said, I didn't think much of it. He was just worried about Tommy. Probably wanted to cheer him up."

Tubbo bit the inside of his cheek. He did not sign up for this. On the bright side, George was not intentionally causing harm. But now he had to explain to George that his friend was now evil.

“Um... George, there wasn't a snack in that box,” he said slowly.

George raised his eyebrows. “What was it then?” There was a hint of anxiety in his voice, which only served to make Tubbo feel worse.

“It was... uh... it was a finger,” Tubbo said, trying not to remember Tommy passing out on the ground as soon as he got a better look at what was resting in the box, trying not to think about the overwhelming panic Tubbo felt as he shook his friend back into awareness.

George snorted. “Very funny, Tubbo,” he said, “Seriously, what was it?”

Come to think of it, saying there was a finger in a box would be amusing if it were out of context.

“I'm not lying,” Tubbo said, twisting the cuffs of his shirt, “It was Technoblade's finger.”

George stared, his mouth slightly agape. “You're joking,” he said, though he sounded less confident than before.

“Nope,” Tubbo said dully, “And then Dream told Tommy to meet him unarmed next week or else he would hurt Techno more.”

George stared at Tubbo, opening and closing his mouth like a fish. Eventually, he stood up, pushing his chair loudly behind him.

“I-I need to go,” he muttered.

As George practically sprinted away, Tubbo wished that Dream would stop manipulating everyone. It would make things so much simpler.

Meanwhile, a wolf covered with blood held a small clump of pink hair in his mouth. Anyone to have seen him would've said that the wolf definitely had a destination in mind, not once looking back or turning around.

And the wolf did indeed have a destination in mind, as a matter of fact, he had a *person* in mind.

The loud blond boy who had an annoying llama. The wolf needed to find him.

Chapter End Notes

I will mention anyone in the notes of the next chapter who successfully guesses the identity of the dog AND his future role in the plot.

I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading! <3

**THIS CHAPTER WAS WRITTEN BEFORE NEWS OF TECHNOBLADE'S
CANCER BECAME PUBLIC. ANY SIMILARITIES WERE COINCIDENTAL.**

I'd appreciate it if it's not mentioned in the comments. I **will** delete the comment.

Realizations Pog?

Chapter Summary

Wilbur and Techno have a talk. Tommy realizes that something is amiss.

Chapter Notes

Tw: phantom limb pain, missing a limb, possessive behavior, wilbur's madness, amputation, implied/referenced child abuse, implied/referenced manipulation,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Techno woke up and promptly felt like crap.

*Our life is over. **This is it boys. Technoblade never dies? I choose death. WHEN DID YOU GUYS GET SO DEPRESSING. TECHNOBRAID IS DEAD. Pardon? TECHNOBRAID, I WILL ALWAYS REMEMEBER YOU.***

Techno was too swamped in pain to even care that Chat was being annoying as always. His arm hurt like hell. What had Dream *done* to it? And why was there rope tied around his left arm and his entire waist?

“Ugh,” he moaned, pleasantly surprised to see that the gag was gone. Small blessings, he supposed.

*Small blessings? Really? **WELCOME BACK TO THE LAND OF THE BRAIDLESS. ARE WE REALLY CHOOSING TO FOCUS ON THIS?***

Techno blinked, forcing his eyes open. He found himself staring at a familiar stone ceiling.

“So, you’re awake,” Wilbur’s voice floated overhead, “I was wondering how long it would take you.”

*Oh great, I forgot he was here. **REMIND ME WHY WE DIDN’T KILL HIM WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE?***

Wilbur sounded... strangely *serious*, for a change. Not angry, not frantic, not paranoid, not vengeful. Just... tired, really.

Techno couldn’t sit up to get a good look at Wilbur, nor did he think he actually wanted to. So instead he just continued staring flatly at the ceiling, trying to ignore the pain.

“Why?” he asked dully, “Want to torture me again? You can cut off one of my fingers; I have nine to spare.”

Techno tried to move all nine of his fingers, but only found that he could move the fingers in his left arm. His right arm still hurt like crap. Techno would’ve twisted his head to get a proper look at it, but honestly, he was too tired to care.

Um... about that. Yeah... I think you are not going to be happy. You can tell because we are using our INDOOR voices.

Actually, that was a pretty bad sign. Especially when Wilbur let out a sigh that Tehcno couldn’t even *begin* to translate.

“Not as quick as you used to be, huh, Technoblade?” he asked, subdued laughter in his voice.

Techno raised his eyebrows. “Mind telling me what that’s supposed to mean?”

*Why would you ask that? **DON’T YOU DARE TELL HIM MR. SOOT. ZIPPY LIPPY. NO TALK.***

Wilbur let out a genuine snort this time around.

“Why don’t you take a proper look at your arm?” he asked, “If it would help, I’ll sit you up against the wall.”

Techno groaned, making no move to look at his arm. He wasn’t in the mood to see how badly Dream had screwed it up. It was bad enough that he had lost to Dream *twice*. It was another thing entirely to be *this* close to freedom before everything went to crap.

Wilbur seemed to take the groan for a yes, because he stepped into Techno’s limited field of vision and painfully dragged him by his left arm to lean Techno properly against the wall.

“Alright,” Wilbur said. He crossed his arms and did a little gesture to Techno almost as if to say “*go on.*” Techno did not appreciate the bitter smile on Wilbur’s face.

Techno sighed and twisted his head to the right—and it was strange moving his head without the familiar weight of his hair—steeling himself to see the state of his right arm. Hopefully, it would be salvageable enough to use later.

Techno blinked. Then he closed his eyes purposefully and reopened them. Then he looked down at the rest of his body before returning his attention to where his arm should be.

Note the *should be* part, because his arm was certainly *not* where it should be.

As a matter of fact, it wasn’t there at all.

TECHNOARM, WE WILL MISS YOU LESS THAN TECHNOBRAID. I MISS YOU TECHNOARM. Guys, Technoarm can’t hear you, he’s DEAD. OOOH, SHUT UP...

Techno's ears started ringing and he could barely hear the chat as the continued bantering loudly inside his skull.

Because his arm *wasn't there*. Where he felt pain, there was only air. Where his arm should connect to his shoulder, there was only a stump.

What the hell.

Wilbur chuckled. "Yeah, I was surprised too," he said, "I asked Dream why he hadn't cut your *legs* off, much more practical to deter running in my eyes, but he said that he had his reasons."

Techno couldn't even muster the energy to scowl.

"And does Dream know about your visit?" Techno asked, looking away from his missing arm in an effort to pretend it was still there. The pain was real enough, at the very least.

Wilbur frowned, furrowing his eyebrows a little bit. "No, why should he?" he asked defensively, "I'm the one in charge; I can do what I want."

"Oh yeah?" Techno asked, raising his eyebrows, "Then how come you're acting like you did whenever you tried to sneak out at night?"

Based off of the way Wilbur's expression darkened, that might not have been the most... *tactful* thing to say.

OOO. You have made him mad. MAN MAD. OH, LET'S SEE HOW ANGRY WE CAN GET HIM. YESSS

Techno promptly ignored the Chat, instead electing to focus on whatever biting remark Wilbur had prepared to throw at him.

"Dream is not controlling me," he said, his voice now gaining that familiar paranoia, "He is *not*." Wilbur jumped to his feet, running his hands through his hair. "You're trying to turn us against each other, you're trying to confuse me, you're trying to manipulate—"

YEAH LIKE YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.

"Like you did to Tommy?" Techno snapped, echoing Chat's statement, "Because I hate to break it to you, Wilbur, you have done the each and every one of those things to him."

Okay, so maybe that wasn't the *best* thing to say to the man Techno *should* be trying to calm down, but Techno honestly couldn't bring himself to care.

Wilbur snarled, stalking toward Technoblade. "I *didn't*—"

You know what? Nope, Technoblade wasn't in the mood to listen to this crap right now.

"You didn't what?" Techno demanded, "You didn't try to turn Tommy against his best friend? You didn't confuse him with the way you hurt him in one second and dote on him in the

next? You didn't manipulate him into thinking that it was *fine, because at least you cared about him?!'*"

YOU TELL HIM TECHNO. FACTS.

Wilbur grabbed Techno by the shirt, lifting Techno a few inches off of the ground.

"Don't," he said, his voice choked, "I didn't; I was just doing what was best for him; it was for the best."

"Yes, actively sending him my finger so that Dream can taunt and manipulate him is definitely what's *best* for Tommy," Techno spat, "Glad to see we're on the same page."

Wilbur dropped him, causing Techno's body to fall to the stone floor with a painful thump.

"What?" he whispered.

He doesn't know?? I mean he did think Tommy was in prison. HE DOESN'T KNOW.

Techno knew that Dream had definitely orchestrated the whole ordeal, but it should've occurred to him that Wilbur wouldn't be in on it. While Wilbur had certainly traumatized Tommy, he had never actually done so on *purpose*, as far as Techno could tell.

"Yeah, that's right," Techno said, "Your pal Dream has a vendetta against our baby brother —"

"My baby brother," Wilbur corrected, almost automatically.

"*Our* baby brother," Techno reiterated, "Tommy doesn't *belong* to you, Wilbur."

"I was there for him, and he was the only one there for me." Wilbur ran his fingers through his hair, leaning against the wall. "We're the only ones we have."

"It sounds like you're trying to convince yourself more than you're trying to convince me." Techno gave Wilbur a searching look. "You want me to be your therapist or something? Because I don't have much left to do here."

Therapy pog? THERAPYBLADE. HE DOESN'T NEED THERAPY HE NEEDS DEATH. DEATH THERAPY.

Wilbur scowled. "I didn't come here to justify myself to you."

"Then why did you come?" Techno asked, "Did you come to mock me? Torture me?"

"No, actually," Wilbur snapped, "I wanted to know about *this*."

Wilbur pulled a knife out of his coat and dropped it to the ground with a loud clatter.

KNIFE. STABBITY STAB STAB. *Hey, what have you got there? A KNIFE. NO.*

“You wanted to ask me about a knife?” Techno asked dryly, “What do you want me to say? It’s sharp, it’s good for stabbing people, typically a murder weapon...”

“*Exactly!*” Wilbur stressed, his voice mixed between distressed and pleased, “You had me at *knife-point*, Technoblade. You could’ve ended it all right then and there.”

It’s true. We tried to tell him. IMAGINE HIM LISTENING TO US. HE NEVER LISTENS TO US. SADNESS.

“True,” Technoblade admitted, “It was pretty tempting, I have to admit.”

“Then why didn’t you?” Wilbur’s voice was a low growl, but it sounded more frustrated than threatening, “You could’ve *ended* it, and I know you wanted to, but you *didn’t*.” Wilbur massaged his eyes. “*Why?*”

Techno sighed. “Because I care about you? Because you need help? Because Tommy would never forgive me if I did it? Because I don’t want the blood of my own brother on my hands?”

Wilbur put his face in his hands and began pacing around the room. “That’s not... that’s not how... you’re lying.”

Techno was beginning to doubt that anything he would say was going to manage to convince Wilbur.

Wow imagine being completely ignored. OH THE WOE. IMAGINE THAT. DEFINITELY HASN’T HAPPENED TO US. WE’RE ALWAYS LISTENED TO.

“If you’re not going to believe me, fine,” Techno said curtly, “But at least know that Dream has no intentions of reuniting you with Tommy and never has.”

There was a small silence.

“I hate you,” Wilbur snarled, looking up at Techno with tears streaming down his cheeks, “I hate you so *damn* much.”

“Okay, Wil,” Techno whispered, “You keep telling yourself that.”

Tommy was looking for Tubbo.

He was searching the halls of the white house for any sign of his best friend, Clementine trailing behind him loyally. So far, they had gotten no luck in the locating of Tommy's best friend, but Tommy had faith they would find him somewhat soon.

That's when Tommy spotted Phil walking a little ways ahead of him.

“Hey, Phil!” Tommy called out, running to catch up with him, “Phil, have you seen Tubbo?”

Phil jumped, looking surprised by Tommy's sudden presence. In all fairness, Tommy did just run up from behind, but that was completely beside the point.

"Tubbo?" Phil asked, "Um... oh, I think he's talking to George."

Tommy frowned. "Why the hell is he talking to George?"

Phil glanced at the ceiling, looking hesitant for some stupid reason. Tommy hated it. He wasn't a child; he could take whatever Phil had to tell him.

"*Phil*," Tommy snapped, "Why is he talking to George?"

Phil sighed. "We think George might be working for Dream," he admitted, "So Tubbo's just asking him a few questions."

Tommy raised his eyebrows. "Gogy?" he demanded, "He barely does anything."

"Well, Tubbo doubts that George is doing anything bad intentionally." Phil's feathers were puffed up, like something was irritating him. "So, it's probably fine, but—"

"Something else is wrong," Tommy interrupted.

Phil pasted on an obviously fake smile.

"Nothing's wrong, mate," he said, "I'm just worried for Techno, that's all."

"You've been worried for Techno this whole time," Tommy pointed out, "But you've never acted like this before."

Phil's shoulders slumped, and his face slid back into a frown. "Tommy..." Phil reached out to touch Tommy's shoulder, but Tommy immediately took a large step away. Phil let his hand drop to his side. "Don't worry about it, okay?"

Yeah, that only made Tommy worry about it more.

And Tommy knew that Phil was probably doing what he thought was best, keeping whatever secret he had from Tommy, but Tommy couldn't manage to stop himself from feeling hurt by it. He didn't want to be coddled; he didn't want to be babied. At the very least, Tommy wanted to stay informed.

"Fine," Tommy said curtly, "Tell me if Tubbo gets back."

Phil nodded and continued walking down the hall. Tommy watched him go, staring at his winged back suspiciously.

"Clementine," Tommy whispered, "I believe Philza is hiding something from us."

Clementine barked.

Tommy nodded. "I'm glad you agree," he said, turning around and walking in the other direction, "I think this requires some sleuthing."

Clementine followed him, clearly because she believed sleuthing was the correct course of action.

If Phil didn't want to tell Tommy whatever he was finding, that was fine. Tommy could figure it out himself.

With the help of Clementine, of course.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was going to be longer and the dog was supposed to be in it, but it didn't work out that way, so you guys are going to have to hold onto your dog theories for the reveal in hopefully next chapter.

And who knows? Maybe the chapter after that will be a Wilbur interlude. That would be pretty pog, if i do say so myself.

Anyway, thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

For the love of prime, if I see one more comment about how this is similar to irl events. I will scream. You're not clever. Don't.

Philza Minetrapped

Chapter Summary

Tommy gets mad after being sad.

Philza minecraft is philza minetrapped.

(that was a terrible pun i'm sorry)

Chapter Notes

Tw: ptsd, close anxiety attack, 'betrayal', argument between friends, blood, violence, manipulation, implied/referenced child abuse

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy *would've* searched for Tubbo, but he was busy, so...

Instead, Tommy decided that it would be simpler to just search Schlatt's office. All he had to do was wait for lunch break or something, wait for Schlatt and whoever else happens to be in there to *leave*, and then break in.

Clementine one-hundred percent approved of this plan. However, that may be because waiting for lunch involved sitting in an adjacent room with Clementine in his lap.

In Tommy's defense, Clementine's fur was very soft, and he was only petting her so much because she enjoyed it. That was the only reason.

When the clock struck noon, Tommy stood up and snuck peeked out the door of the room. And waited. And waited. For a moment, Tommy was slightly concerned that he had *missed* Schlatt altogether, and that he office had been empty for hours.

However, finally, Schlatt stepped out of his office, holding his communicator to his ear. His brows were furrowed, like he was worried, but he wasn't actually saying anything.

Well, that was just weird. Tommy had half a mind to ask him about it, but even *he* wasn't stupid enough to interrupt Schlatt when he was doing something so serious. Besides, he had already pushed his luck with the stealing the phone thing this morning. There was no need to push Schlatt any further.

Though, Tommy had to admit that it would be nice to actually figure out when this guy would snap. He seemed to have gotten aggravated with being compared to Wilbur and Dream the other day, maybe Tommy should try that.

Later, though. He'd do it later when he wasn't being a coward.

Besides, Tommy had sleuthing to do.

As soon as Schlatt had disappeared from sight, Tommy crept to the closed office doors and tried to open them. He was met with an unpleasant surprise when the doors did not actually budge.

"You have got to be kidding me," Tommy muttered, tugging at the door handle, "You have *got* to be kidding me."

Clementine gently pressed her head against Tommy's leg comfortingly.

"Panicking never gets you anywhere. Assess the situation," a voice that sounded painfully like Wilbur's whispered in Tommy's head.

"You're right, Clementine," Tommy said, taking a deep breath, "I need to stay calm and assess the situation."

He looked around. He was in an empty hallway, which was obviously good. It meant that there were no witnesses to any crimes.

Tommy glanced up at the ceiling and noticed little security cameras. Ok, so there would be witnesses. Tommy would have to either figure out a way to disable the security cameras, which... Tommy didn't know how to do, or he could give up and find a more legal method of sleuthing.

Wait a moment... what was he even thinking? Tommy didn't care about legal repercussions. He was the great TommyInnit for goodness' sakes. He didn't care if he got in trouble with *Schlatt*.

With new boldness, Tommy reached into his pocket for a paperclip. After all his various grieving and robbing experiences through the years, Tommy was very well attuned with the way of the lock-picking.

Getting down on his knees, he twisted the paperclip open and stuck the wire into the lock. His hands were trembling for some weird reason, and he almost felt like the security cameras were burning a hole into his back.

Tommy shut and reopened his eyes, mentally shaking himself. He'd be fine. He was going to figure out what was going on, even if it did get him in a dirt load of trouble.

Tommy swore as the shaking in his hands messed up another nearly successful lock-picking attempt, and he wiped sweat away from his forehead. Why was he feeling like this? He had successfully picked locks loads of times before now. This should be easy for Tommy, barely a cinch.

So why was his heart beating at a mile per minute, as if he were in mortal danger by even *considering* picking the lock?

“Listen, I want Tommy punished, I want something to happen to Tommy for what he’s done.”
“Dream please escort Tommy out of my country.” “To REVOKE the citizenship, of Wilbur Soot and TommyInnit.”

Tommy’s breaths were getting shorter. This could get him in so much trouble. If he had gotten exiled for robbing George’s house, how bad would the punishment be for breaking into the *president’s office*?

Oh, this was so stupid, he was going to get exiled again, he was going to get sent back to Dream, they were going to kill—

Clementine gently nipped Tommy’s arm, breaking him out of his spiral. Tommy stared at Clementine in surprise, his breathing and heartbeat still shaky.

“I’m alright,” Tommy forced out, scratching Clementine behind the ears, “Yeah, I’m alright.”

Clementine barked up at him doubtfully, and Tommy let out another shuddering breath, giving the lock one last mournful look.

“Do you want to go find Tubbo?” he finally asked, “I bet Tubbo would have some answers, what do you think?”

Clementine barked again, much more cheerfully this time.

Yeah, it wouldn’t hurt to just get some fresh air, see if he can’t find Tubbo to explain things, and take Clementine out on a walk. Clementine was probably feeling cooped up anyway; she should be getting more exercise in the great outdoors, not inside a stuffy White House.

“Yeah, okay,” Tommy sighed, hauling himself to his feet and massaging his chest. His heart was still beating uncomfortably. “Let’s go, Clem.”

Clementine practically led the charge to the entrance of the White House, and Tommy saluted to the security guards as he left.

It occurred to Tommy that this was the first time he had actually been out on the streets of L’manberg, or Manberg, since he had time traveled. It was... strange, almost as if he were walking through a dream as he saw buildings that were completely obliterated with Techno’s withers and Wilbur’s explosion.

Clementine stayed close to Tommy, now that he was actually surrounded by pedestrians. He noticed some strange glances in his direction, and Tommy made sure to pull his hood up. He’d prefer not to get recognized and swamped by the press or the national guard or something.

“Alright, Clementine,” Tommy muttered, “Where do you think Tubbo has gone?”

Clementine looked up at the air and sniffed deliberately. Tommy vaguely wondered if she had a cold or something, but when she started walking down the sidewalk with purpose, Tommy realized that she was actually picking up Tubbo's scent.

Man, Tubbo had probably found him the smartest dog in the entire city.

Tommy quickly followed Clementine, recognizing the route to a coffee shop that Wilbur had *revered* before he was exiled from his own country.

Come to think of it, Tommy should probably visit Niki's bakery soon. He hadn't seen Niki since... *Prime*, when *was* the last time he had seen Niki?

It didn't matter. One thing at a time. Tommy was finding Tubbo.

Or, at least, he *was* finding Tubbo before Clementine decided to stop randomly, staring in a random direction. Tommy stopped behind her, following her line of sight.

Tommy saw nothing. Well, he saw people and more buildings, but he definitely didn't see anything that could be useful.

"Um... you okay there, Clementine?" Tommy asked, "Did you smell something gross or some crap?"

Clementine barked, not looking away. Tommy squinted, trying to see if there was something Clementine could see that Tommy could not.

Still nothing.

"I'm sure it's nothing," he said, unable to believe that he was actually comforting his own dog, "You shouldn't worry so much."

Clementine finally forced herself to look away from the spot and started trotting back toward presumably Tubbo's direction, much to Tommy's relief.

Only for her to stop a block later, now looking behind her.

Tommy sighed.

"Clementine, I love you, but I think you are being paranoid." He grimaced at the thought. "And being paranoid did nothing good for anyone so I'd suggest you stop now before I get very upset."

Clementine gave Tommy a gentle nudge, but she didn't look away. Tommy sighed again and turned around, hoping that he would actually be able to *see* something this time.

To Tommy's immense surprise, he did see something slightly out of place.

A dog was walking down the street toward Tommy. Except he was the ugliest dog Tommy had ever seen. His fur seemed matted, and the color was... *splotched*? Tommy wasn't sure,

he couldn't tell from here. However, from the looks the dog was receiving from other pedestrians, he was clearly not a pretty sight.

Maybe that was why Clementine stepped in front of Tommy protectively.

However, as the dog walked closer, Tommy realized that probably wasn't the only reason Clementine did not trust this dog.

Tommy had previously thought that the dog had strange coloring; however, from closer examination, Tommy realized that the dog actually had *dried blood* matted onto its fur.

But that wasn't the worst part, Tommy realized as the dog stopped in front of Clementine. There was large chunk of *hair* in the dog's mouth.

And it was *pink*.

Technoblade.

"No way," Tommy muttered, the dried blood and pink hair suddenly ironed into his vision, "No way."

The dog tried to walk up to Tommy, but Clementine stopped him, letting out a short growl.

Tommy's mind was racing.

Had the dog attacked some random dude with pink hair? Unlikely, especially when this dog had searched for Tommy specifically. Did the dog belong to Dream? Was this a threat? Or did Tommy know the dog from somewhere else?

Come to think of it, the dog *did* look a little familiar, but it was really impossible to tell with all the blood and dirtiness.

"It's alright, Clementine," Tommy said, crouching down to scratch Clementine from beneath the ears. Clementine moved away, still standing very rigidly next to Tommy.

The new dog walked closer, plopping the chunk of pink hair at Tommy's feet.

Fingers trembling, Tommy crouched down and picked up the chunk of hair. There was still the possibility that this was someone else's hair. That this wasn't Techno; that Tommy was jumping to conclusions; that there was a perfectly normal reason why Tommy was being tracked down by a dog.

And why did the dog look so *damn* familiar?

"I don't..." Tommy forced himself to say, "I don't... I don't know what you want."

The dog tilted his head questioningly.

Tommy sighed. Clearly, this was not working as it should.

“Is this Techno’s?” Tommy decided to ask instead, holding the hair for the dog to sniff, “Does this belong to Techno?”

The dog barked once and turned around, as if wanting Tommy to follow him.

Tommy’s stomach did a flip.

“Wait,” he said, horror filling his voice, “Does that blood belong to Techno?”

The dog didn’t say anything, but of course he couldn’t. He was a dog. Dogs didn’t speak. Tommy was just being an idiot, like always.

But that blood belonged to Techno, and what happened to him, and it was all Tommy’s fault, Tommy was supposed to be there not Techno, Techno hadn’t even done anything...

Clementine was gently nudging Tommy’s side, and Tommy forced himself to take another unsteady breath.

Tommy jumped when he heard someone stop next to him.

“Tommy?” said a familiar voice, sounding surprised.

Tommy leapt to his feet. “Tubbo!” he exclaimed, “I was just looking for you!”

Tubbo stared at Tommy uncertainly. “Yeah... who’s the new dog? Is he okay?”

Tommy glanced back down at the dog that was certainly holding some proof that Technoblade was anything *but* okay.

“I think the dog is fine,” Tommy said hurriedly, “But Tubbo, I think Technoblade is in danger, more danger than usual I mean.”

Tubbo frowned, his brow furrowing. “And... what makes you say that?” he asked, his voice sounding mildly off.

Well, that was strange.

“The dog, obviously,” Tommy said, gripping the piece of Techno’s hair like a lifeline, “Something happened to Techno. See? I have his hair, and the-the blood—”

Tubbo stared down at the dog before looking back up at Tommy. “How do you know that the dog didn’t just attack a random person with pink hair?” he asked, sounding doubtful.

Tommy gritted his teeth in frustration. Why didn’t Tubbo understand?

“Because the dog was seeking me out!” His voice was growing louder, but Tommy couldn’t even bring himself to care. “And I *swear* I know this dog, it’s on the tip of my tongue, I know it’s Techno, we can save him, we can—”

“Tommy, we don’t know where Techno is,” Tubbo interrupted, sounding slightly impatient.

Tommy flinched slightly before he realized.

Tubbo was *lying*.

Tubbo had gotten better at it over the years; his tells were a lot less obvious then they were before; but the fact remained that Tubbo was tommy's *best friend*.

And he was *lying*.

Tommy took a large step back, his heart hammering against his chest.

"You know where he is," Tommy breathed out, staring at Tubbo with shock, "You-you..."

Tubbo straightened, looking panicked as he waved his arms back and forth frantically in a cutting motion. "No, no, we don't know where he is! Where would you even—"

"Don't lie to me."

Tommy's voice was colder than ice, and from the way Tubbo took his own step back, Tommy could only assume that the words had cut deep.

Or maybe Tubbo was just sick of him. Maybe Tubbo couldn't even stand to be so close to Tommy that he had to step away.

For a tense moment they stared at each other, ignoring the pedestrians that walked around them. Honestly, it was a miracle nobody had stopped to take a look at two teenagers having a confrontation in the middle of the street. "I'm...well, *technically*..."

"*Technically*?" Tommy demanded, "Technically? You should've told me the minute you had a *clue*!"

Tubbo frowned. "We didn't want you to—"

"Want me to what?" Tommy ignored how his voice *was* now drawing the attention of citizens, how he was likely to get in the papers tomorrow morning, because *he had trusted Tubbo, and Tubbo had betrayed him*. "Want me to screw everything up? Want me to be informed about my *brother*!?"

"We didn't want you to go staging your own rescue!" Tubbo cried out, "We didn't want you to do anything reckless!"

"Yeah, well I wouldn't *have* to stage my own rescue if you guys would have rescued him already!" Tommy shouted back, "What have you been doing, sitting on this information?"

Tubbo took another step back, having the gall to look *hurt*.

"Of course not," he said, his voice cracking, "We've only learned it this *morning*. Philza is already out scouting the area—"

Tommy growled, spinning around and marching straight toward the White House, Clementine and other dog trailing loyally behind.

Tubbo ran after him. “Where are you going?” he asked.

“Where do you think I’m going?” Tommy snapped, “I’m going to demand to know where the hell Phil is, because Schlatt’s sure to be keeping tabs on him if he’s ‘scouting out the area’ like you say—”

“He *is*—”

“And why should I believe you?” Tommy asked coldly, “You’ve done nothing but *lie*—”

“That isn’t true,” Tubbo protested, “Tommy, I wanted to tell you, I really did—”

Tommy was so *sick* of hearing excuses.

“Then why didn’t you? You could’ve told me; you didn’t have to listen to *Schlatt*, who has done nothing but *hurt* you—”

“He has done nothing but *help* us this entire time!” It was Tubbo’s turn to shout, and Tommy tried not to remember another argument when Tubbo raised his voice. “I’ve been telling you this time and time again, so why won’t you just *listen*?!”

“You know why?” Tommy screamed, stopping in his tracks and spinning around to meet Tubbo’s eyes, “You know why I won’t listen? Because *Dream* told me he was helping! Because *Dream* said that he cared! Because I let Dream play me like a little piece on his little chessboard, and I refuse to be *lied to* again!”

Tubbo didn’t reply, and Tommy took vindictive pleasure in his dumbstruck expression.

“So, don’t tell me I should trust him because he’s been *nice*,” Tommy snarled, turning back around and marching away again, “Because Eret was *nice*. Wilbur was *nice*. Dream was *nice*.”

Tommy hesitated before lowering his voice so that only Tubbo could hear.

“*You* were nice.”

Phil reached the coordinates Techno sent with relative ease, quietly landing on the spot.

Already using an invisibility potion and having multiple on hand for when this current one wore out, all Phil had to worry about was staying completely silent, and hoping there was nothing around to catch his scent.

Fortunately, this was not the first time Phil had to make sure his footsteps didn’t make a sound on the earth beneath them, make sure his wings didn’t move against each other too loudly, make sure that his breathing is only barely audible to his own ears.

So, Phil was fairly certain that any ordinary bystander wouldn't notice his presence.

Of course, things would get a lot more suspicious when Phil started actually digging around for an entrance, but Phil would just have to be as careful as possible about that.

Phil needed to rescue Techno. Phil needed to knock some sense into Wilbur, to show him that he was loved. Phil needed to *not die*, because he wasn't sure if any of his sons would be able to bear that loss on top of everything else.

Just focus. Listen and feel for any inconsistencies in the earth.

This would've been so much easier if Phil had just brought a dog to sniff out Techno's scent. Then again, apparently Schlatt had already tried that a few days ago, and the dogs had lost the trail at Pogtopia.

Still, maybe with Techno's fresh escape attempt, the dogs could've...

Phil shook himself mentally. There was no point in worrying about it now. All he could do was focus on what he *did* have, which was mainly himself.

Philza circled the area, listening for anyone approaching. He heard nothing and no one, but he doubted he was on any entrance. The earth was too hard, too consistent; there was nothing indicating an entrance. There wasn't even any dried blood on the ground, which even Dream wouldn't be able to get rid of completely.

Well, at least Phil had a better idea of what he was looking for. He needed to find blood, and maybe some stray pieces of pink hair, though Dream would probably have had an easier time of destroying that particular evidence.

It took Phil about thirty minutes of silently moving through the forest to find dark, barely perceivable, blood stains on the dirt floor. It was a good thing it was still broad daylight, because although it was a risky move in terms of being seen, Phil wouldn't have been able to see the blood without it.

Phil crouched down to investigate the blood spatter as he discretely removed another potion from his inventory. His current one was running out, and the last thing he needed was to be seen.

Phil heard soft footsteps coming in his direction, and he froze, immediately inserting his potion back into his inventory. If he was lucky, nobody would even notice he was there.

Still, Phil opened and closed his fist, ready to pull a sword out of his inventory at a moment's notice.

The footsteps got louder, and the worst part about this situation was that they were coming up from *behind* Phil. Phil itched to turn around, to see who his potential attacker was, but he couldn't without risking being seen.

Phil felt his breathing quicken, and his lungs to take in oxygen at a steady rhythm.

So much was riding on this. Phil had to stay calm.

As Dream walked past Phil and into his line of sight, however, it took everything Philza had not to *strangle* the masked man then and there.

He watched as Dream looked about him. Phil didn't move a muscle, praying that his potion effect wouldn't run out before Dream looked away.

Philza must've jinxed it, because the minute he could see his own hands and Dream's head snapped in his direction, Phil knew he was screwed.

Didn't mean Phil wasn't about to go down without a fight, though.

Phil snatched his sword out of his inventory, already grabbing another splash potion of invisibility as well. Before he could even close his hands around the smooth bottle, however, Dream was already on Phil, attacking him mercilessly.

"Always a pleasant surprise to see the esteemed Philza Minecraft," Dream said, sounding not at all concerned as he dodged a Philza's well-aimed swipe toward the head.

"Can't say I feel the same," Phil grunted out, using his wings to propel himself slightly into the air and gain the high ground.

"That's cheating," Dream gasped as he blocked Phil's crushing blow to head.

"Is it?" Phil asked, spinning away from Dream's next strike, "I thought it was a pleasure to meet me."

Dream stopped, suddenly sheathing his sword. "You know what?" he asked, "You're right."

Phil didn't hesitate, landing suddenly and immediately trying to skewer Dream like a kebab.

Dream rolled out of the way. "Keep this up, and I'll kill Techno!"

Dream may have intended for Phil to freeze, whether in shock or for fear, but Phil wasn't Dream's little puppet.

Phil wasn't scared. He was *furious*. Furious that this man could tromp around taking enjoyment out of hurting *his sons*. And his rage only fueled his adrenaline.

Phil should've remembered how dangerous rage could be in a fight, especially in a fight against the likes of Dream.

But he didn't, so perhaps that was why Phil didn't notice the potion of slowness being thrown in his direction until it was too late.

Dream laughed, walking casually up to Phil, who was trying to push against the resistance in his limbs and slice Dream's head clean off.

“You’re out of practice,” Dream said, letting the tip of his sword rest against Phil’s neck, “But it was a good fight, I’ll give you that.”

Phil growled as he tried to surge toward Dream, but Dream easily stepped out of the way.

“Don’t be like that.” Dream tilted his head toward Phil. “I wonder what those wings would look like up on my wall?”

Icy dread filled Phil’s chest.

Dream knocked Phil to the ground, searching Phil’s pockets for his communicator. Upon finding the thing, Dream crushed it.

And there went Phil’s last hope of being tracked.

“I guess we’ll figure it out later,” Dream continued, pressing his sword painfully against the back of Phil’s neck, “But look on the bright side. At least you’ll see your sons again.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello dear readers!

I've recently discovered people don't read author's notes, so if you are reading this, give yourselves a pat on the back, congrats!

Anyway, i still haven't revealed the identity of the dog, sorry, Tommy decided he wouldn't recognize him.

I'm also sorry for the angst.

BUT WILBUR INTERLUDE IS NEXT CHAPTER FINALLY WE"VE MADE IT
EVERYONE GIVE YOURSELVES A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR MAKING IT
THIS FAR

Honestly, i'm in awe over how popular this fic has become, you guys are amazing, i am so grateful for all of you who have joined me on this journey, and oh no now i sound like i'm 'improvising' a speech at the oscars help.

Anyways thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

MANDATORY REST STOP. do what you need to do b/c the interludes are long man.

Wilbur Interlude Part 1

Chapter Summary

“Hur’s,” Wilbur whispered, letting out another sob.

“What hurts?” the woman asked, “Can you tell me where it hurts?”

“Everything,” Wilbur cried, “I want my mummy. I want my daddy.”

Or, the moment we've all been waiting for has been split in half b/c i said so.

Chapter Notes

tw: child abandonment, death of parent, broken family relationships, sorta child neglect, war, canonical deaths, manipulation, child abuse, paranoia, grief, mourning, ptsd, nightmares, probably medical inaccuracies

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“That’s what I’m afraid of. People leaving.”

Wilbur only had one memory concerning his birth family.

They had taken Wilbur to the park, promising that they were going to have “lots of fun” playing together. Wilbur was pretty sure his mother had held his hand as they walked there, but he couldn’t quite remember.

He had only been four at the time; Wilbur couldn’t even remember his parents faces.

The day began beautifully. Wilbur knew that it was sunny, that the sun had made the grassy field seem brighter, and his spirits soared with the butterflies near the wildflowers. It was amazing, idyllic almost.

Wilbur now knew that it wouldn’t last. Poor, naïve little four-year-old Wilbur didn’t suspect a thing.

He remembered his father standing up with his mother. He remembered them turning around. Wilbur, assuming it was time to go, sadly ran after them.

He would never forget how his mother had turned around and said, “You can keep playing, darling. We’re just taking a stroll, and then I promise we’ll be right back to get you and go home.”

If Wilbur could remember what her face looked like, he assumed he would remember something akin to guilt behind her eyes. But, at the time, Wilbur suspected nothing, excited that he got to play more in the pretty field.

It wasn’t until the sky began darkening that Wilbur started suspect.

Being outside at night was never safe, especially if you were unarmed and defenseless, especially if you were an unarmed and defenseless *child*.

Especially when said unarmed and defenseless child was tired, and alone, and panicking.

When Wilbur heard the first moans and inhuman footsteps, he *screamed*. He screamed for his parents, he begged someone to come help, *mummy, daddy*, please.

But nobody came.

And as anyone except Wilbur knew, screaming only attracted the monsters.

Wilbur remembered shrieking as an arrow landed approximately an inch in front of him. He remembered running away as fast as he could, only to nearly crash into a creeper and get pushed back by the edge of the explosion. He remembered the gut-wrenching terror of a giant spider pinning him to the ground, with what seemed a thousand red eyes glowing in the dark, it’s mandibles opening with a terrifying clicking sound, and—

A sword plunged through the spider’s body, causing it to collapse on top of Wilbur. He let out another startled scream, tears streaming down his face as he looked up at his savior.

“Mummy?” he whispered, only processing the long hair and soft features in his panic.

The woman heaved the spider off of him, gently pulling him up to a sitting position.

“No, darling,” the woman said, her voice impossibly soft, even as Wilbur could still hear the monsters crawling about, “Are you injured?”

Wilbur was dizzy. His head hurt. He was hungry. He wanted to go home.

“Hur’s,” Wilbur whispered, letting out another sob.

“What hurts?” the woman asked, “Can you tell me where it hurts?”

“Everything,” Wilbur cried, “I want my mummy. I want my daddy.”

The woman had taken Wilbur gently into her arms, and Wilbur had fallen asleep, still sobbing.

Wilbur didn't remember much after that. He remembered waking up and learning that the woman's name was Kristin, that her husband was Phil, that their son close to Wilbur's age was Techno.

"Hey mate," Phil had said the morning Wilbur had first woken up in the Minecraft home, "Can you tell me your name?"

Wilbur stared down at his sheets, still shaken from what had happened the night before.

"Wilbur," he said quietly.

"Hello, Wilbur," Phil said, "Kristin's making you breakfast right now, but we were wondering if you knew where your parents are?"

Wilbur straightened at the mention of his parents.

"They said to wait for them at the field!" he exclaimed, "We have to go back! They're probably worried."

Phil rested a hand on Wilbur's shoulder, and there was an odd expression on his face, like he had just been forced to eat broccoli.

"Do you know their names?" Phil asked.

Wilbur hesitated, thinking really hard, before shaking his head. "They're probably really worried," he informed Phil, "We should go back to the field."

A small part of him was deeply worried at the thought of returning to the field where the monsters had roamed, but it would be worth it to see Mummy and Daddy again.

"How about this?" Phil offered, "I'll keep my eye out and check the field every day for your parents. If I find them, we'll see where we go from there."

"You will find them," Wilbur said confidently, "She promised."

"Yeah?" Phil gave Wilbur a long look. "How old are you, mate?"

Wilbur proudly held up four fingers. "I'm four!"

"Wow!" Phil exclaimed, "You're a big boy, aren't you?"

Wilbur nodded eagerly, beaming. He *was* a big boy, thank you very much.

Still, a grimace had crossed over Phil's face for a moment. Wilbur wasn't sure what to make of it at the time. Now, he knew that it was likely one of disgust. Disgust toward the parents

who abandoned their four-year-old child in a field.

Then Kristin came in with a steaming plate of eggs, ending the conversation as Kristin asked him if anything still hurt and if he slept well and all of the things Wilbur felt his mummy should be asking him.

Wilbur remembered feeling awkward as Phil and Kristin tried to pull Wilbur into the conversation at the dinner table. Wilbur remembered being too shy to even attempt speaking; he was already disrupting the family's balance. There was no need to disrupt it any more than he already had.

Wilbur remembered the first one-on-one conversation he had with Techno. He had seen Techno playing with one of his foam swords, and he wanted to investigate.

So of course, the first words out of his mouth were, "Your hair is pink."

Techno glared. "So?"

Wilbur shrugged. "I dunno," he said, "I wish my hair was pink."

Techno shrugged, looking at the second sword that he had. Looking kind of begrudging, he handed it to Wilbur.

"You wanna spar?" Techno asked, "Phil says once I'm good enough I can use real weapons."

Wilbur smiled. "Sure!"

Techno beat him. He beat Wilbur every time they 'sparring.' That was okay though. It was fun, and it helped make the wait for Mummy and Daddy less painful.

He remembered waking up one night and panicking.

"I want my mummy," Wilbur had cried when Kristin had come in and asked Wilbur what was wrong, "She's going to be worried. She said she'd come back. Daddy too."

Now, Wilbur understood that he had been in denial. At the time, Wilbur stubbornly held himself to that belief.

Kristin held him when he cried. She gently explained that Wilbur could stay as long as he needed. She ran her fingers through Wilbur's hair comfortingly.

Wilbur liked Kristin.

Eventually, Wilbur finally realized that his parents weren't coming back. That he wasn't going to hear a knocking on the Minecraft's front door and discover that his parents had been searching for him frantically, wanting to recover their little boy.

Wilbur was alone. Fully and completely alone.

So, Wilbur did the only reasonable thing a four-year-old did when he realized his parents had left him to die in a field.

He lashed out.

He refused to leave his room. He yelled at Phil when he asked what was wrong. He screamed at Techno when he asked if they wanted to ‘spar’ again, which was what he called playing. He refused to say anything at all when Kristin came, telling him that she was leaving him dinner on the floor near the door.

Wilbur wasn’t sure how long he had stayed angry. He was pretty sure that he had thrown things around at one point. That he tried to cause as much noise and chaos as possible.

Kristin was the first one to come up and see what was wrong, actually entering Wilbur’s room. Wilbur screamed, running at Kristin and punching her as hard as he could.

“Go away!” he shouted, “Go away, go away, go away! I hate you!”

Kristin didn’t go away. She just stood there patiently as Wilbur punched her in the stomach as hard as he could.

“I hate you!” Wilbur continued, sobbing, “I want my *real* mummy! I don’t want to be here!”

“I know,” Kristin said calmly.

Phil came in as Wilbur began speaking again. Wilbur barely noticed his arrival.

“She *promised*! She said she’d come back! I want her to come back!”

“I know, darling.” Kristin’s voice was quiet. Soft. She called him ‘darling.’ Wilbur’s mummy used to call him darling.

It made him angry.

“Don’t-don’t call me that!” Wilbur could barely see past the tears pouring down his eyes; he could barely breath past his gasping sobs; he could barely *think* past the anger, past what Wilbur now knew to be *betrayal*.

“Okay,” Kristin replied, not sounding at all angry, even though Wilbur was still repeatedly hitting her.

Wilbur eventually tired himself out and found himself sobbing into Kristin’s arms. Phil joined the group hug, and Wilbur found himself sandwiched in between two people that had been more there for him than his parents ever were.

“I want to go *home*,” Wilbur whimpered in Kristin’s shirt.

“I know,” Kristin whispered, gently massaging his back, “I know.”

“Just know that you’ll always have a place at our home,” Phil promised.

Wilbur had fallen asleep in their arms, feeling safe.

Eventually, living with the Minecrafts felt less like staying at a stranger's house and felt a lot more like staying at a cousin's house. Wilbur found himself being able to hold more and more interesting conversations with everyone, and he actually felt like he belonged, in some strange way.

On Wilbur's fifth birthday, which turned out to also be the same day as Techno's, Phil and Kristin gave them a party to celebrate. There was cake, and they sang a funny little song. That would've been enough for Wilbur, so he was actually rather surprised when Kristin placed a carefully wrapped package on the table.

"I wrapped it," she had said, winking, "Phil can't be trusted anywhere around wrapping paper."

"Aw, I'm not *that* bad," Phil protested, placing another parcel in front of Techno.

"He is," Techno said, sounding abnormally dry for a fresh five-year-old, "Remember last Christmas?"

Kristin let out a snort. "Layers of wrapping paper, I swear to god—"

"Okay, okay," Phil said, raising his hands in surrender, "I get it, I get it."

Wilbur cracked a smile, painfully wishing that one day he could share memories like this with the family as well. He returned his attention to the parcel sitting in front of him.

He had never gotten a present before. His parents said they couldn't afford it whenever he asked, so it was strange to receive one now.

Still, Wilbur carefully began undoing the wrapping, trying not to rip any of the wrapping paper. Techno had no such carefulness and had already completely unwrapped his gift, revealing a checkered box.

"It's a chess set," Phil explained to Techno, ruffling his hair, "You'll like it, mate."

Techno gave the box a skeptical look, but he nodded.

Wilbur finally got all of his wrapping paper off, revealing a fancy shaped case.

"What is it?" Wilbur whispered, brushing his fingers against the hard surface.

Kristin smiled. "It's a ukulele," she explained, "Here, let me show you how to undo the latches."

Wilbur watched in fascination as Kristin undid the silver latches, revealing a small instrument that looked a bit like a guitar.

“You liked watching Kristin play the piano so much that we figured you’d like an instrument of your own,” Phil explained.

That was true. Wilbur loved the pretty songs that came out of the piano in the front room. He loved how simply pressing down on the keys would make a nice clear sound. He loved watching Kristin’s fingers fly across the piano keys like magic.

Wilbur stared at the ukulele with a new reverence. “Thank you,” he whispered.

Phil ruffled his hair, and warmth spread through Wilbur’s chest. “It was no problem, mate.”

Kristin spread her arms out welcomingly. “Now can I get a hug from both of my birthday boys?”

Both Techno and Wilbur exited from their seats at the table and hugged Kristin, who held them both close.

“I love you,” she whispered.

“Love you too,” Techno said into her shoulder, sounding like he was rolling his eyes.

Wilbur wasn’t sure what to make of it, but somehow, the words slipped out more easily than he expected.

“Love you.”

Kristin began teaching Wilbur the ukulele, patiently correcting him whenever he misplaced his fingers on the strings. Wilbur loved strumming the instrument and making his own songs, and he terrorized the house for hours on end, although Techno was the only one to complain about it.

After finally learning rules, Techno, as it turned out, took deep interest in the game of chess, and he managed to rope Wilbur into a great many games. Wilbur, to his relief, found chess *far* easier than sparring. So while Techno played the game with great gusto, eager to capture or ‘kill’ any pieces when he had an opportunity to, Wilbur took immense enjoyment out of actually strategizing and leading his small army to victory.

Not that Wilbur won every game. Techno won his fair share, and Phil beat them all every time either of them would dare challenge him.

Later, when they were older, Phil taught them proper chess openings and strategies. Techno learned to press back his constant need to take a piece whenever he saw an opportunity to, and once he did, he actually became quite the formidable opponent.

Of course, nothing could be perfect. Wilbur still had nightmares about being left alone in the dark field, about the monsters chasing him, about nearly dying, about Phil leaving him, about Kristin leaving him, about being left *alone and abandoned*.

Kristin or Phil would come in and comfort him from the nightmare, but more often than not it was Kristin. She was better at it, anyway, hugging him close until Wilbur fell comfortably asleep in her arms. Eventually, Wilbur managed to summon up the courage to go to Phil and Kristin's room when the nightmares got bad, and he ended up sleeping in between Phil and Kristin. Sometimes, Techno would climb in with him.

As the nightmares worsened, Phil showed Wilbur how to properly hold a sword (wooden, of course), how to hold a good stance, how to protect himself from monsters with or without a weapon if he ever found himself alone out at night again.

"You shouldn't be though," Phil said, "You're not foolish enough to sneak out yourself, and Kristin, and I aren't foolish enough to leave you or Techno alone. It should be fine."

Wilbur, to his surprise, actually believed him.

When Wilbur was six, Kristin started teaching both him and Techno how to read and do arithmetic and stuff that both Wilbur and Techno could agree was "incredibly boring."

Well, both Wilbur and Techno could also agree that reading wasn't so bad as long as the book was good, which of course, was where their agreement came to an end. While Wilbur and Techno sometimes read similar books, more often than not they had extremely differing tastes.

When Wilbur was six and a half, Kristin started showing Wilbur how to play the guitar, saying that he had "graduated from the ukulele." Somehow, the guitar was even better than the ukulele, and Wilbur was in love with his small, child-sized version of the instrument.

Sometimes, he and Kristin would play duets. Kristin playing her own guitar, and Wilbur playing his.

And somehow, through the years, the Minecraft house stopped being the "the Minecraft house" and became simply "home." Techno became a brother to him, and Phil and Kristin were better than his parents ever were.

He never called them Mom and Dad, though. His mom and dad had left him. Phil and Kristin were here to stay.

Or at least, that's what he thought.

It was a few days after Wilbur and Techno's seventh birthday when Kristin and Phil announced the news.

They were all gathered in the living room. Kristin had her hand rested on her belly, and she was wearing an expression that seemed nervous and happy all at the same time.

Phil was wearing a similar expression.

"Wilbur, Techno," Kristin said slowly, "We have very big news."

Techno's eyes were blown wide, which was strange, because Kristin had not yet told them what this big news was.

"What is it?" Wilbur asked, nervousness or excitement mixing in his stomach, he wasn't sure which.

Kristin took a deep breath as Phil squeezed her hand encouragingly.

"You're going to have a new sibling," Kristin said, smiling, "I'm pregnant."

Oh.

Oh.

"Oh," Wilbur said, his mind still struggling to wrap his mind around the news. Kristin was having a *baby*. They were having a sibling.

"When is he coming?" Techno asked.

"Well, we're not sure it's going to be a boy yet," Phil said, "You could also be having a baby sister."

"And I'm due for about another six months," Kristin answered Techno's original question.

Techno made a face at that, and maybe if Wilbur had been in a less stunned mood, he would've jokingly stuck his tongue out. Instead, his mind was rushing through the possibilities.

Was this it? Was this the moment where Kristin and Phil's love ran out? Would Kristin focus all of her attentions on her *real* child instead of the random kid she picked up.

Still, Wilbur plastered on a smile.

"That's great!" he exclaimed, hoping that he sounded convincing.

Kristin smiled, leaned over, and gently squeezed Wilbur and Techno's hands. "Don't worry," she said, "Our love for you won't go away now that there will be a new addition to this household."

"Never," Phil promised.

Sometimes, Wilbur wondered if Kristin was telepathic. Still, Wilbur believed them, and it was quite the burden released from his mind.

Still, it was hard to get rid of that inkling of anxiety. How did he know Kristin wouldn't change her mind?

Then again, Wilbur was abandoned by his biological parents, so maybe it didn't make that much of a difference.

Somehow, that wasn't all that comforting.

Still, Wilbur followed updates on the baby with dedication, and he soon found himself growing excited for his new baby brother, if the doctors and Techno were to be believed. Kristin's belly started growing larger and larger, and Wilbur would begin speaking to the little brother inside there at Kristin's prompting.

He'd also play songs on the guitar for the baby. Kristin couldn't play so well now that her stomach was about the size of a watermelon, so that particular duty fell to Wilbur and Wilbur alone.

"What are you going to name him?" Wilbur had asked.

Kristin smiled, her hand resting on her stomach. "It'll come to me."

Wilbur found that incredibly impractical. Techno did too, apparently.

"What if it doesn't?" Techno asked, looking up from reading *the Hobbit*, "I have some suggestions, if you need them."

Kristin shook her head. "Thank you, but I have some backups if all else fails."

The day the baby finally arrived was a mess.

He honestly wasn't sure what had happened. One moment they were living life as usual, the next, Phil was rushing out of the house to grab a doctor or nurse or something. The next, Phil was telling both Techno and Wilbur to go play outside while Kristin began screaming at the top of her lungs.

They played outside for most of the day, both of them getting increasingly worried, when Phil finally came out and told them to come inside for the night. The screaming had stopped for now, it seemed.

When they were safely in the kitchen, Wilbur expressed a concern that had been eating up his mind ever since he heard the screaming.

"Is she dying?" he asked, his voice filled with anxiety, "Phil, is she dying?!"

Phil grimaced, placing two haphazardly made sandwiches on the table. "No, mate," he said, "this is... normal."

As the boys ate, Phil kept glancing at the door repeatedly, and all three of them jumped when Kristin let out another shout. Phil all but pushed the boys upstairs to their beds before rushing back to Kristin's side.

Wilbur understood, but it was still unsettling. If this was normal, why was Phil so worried?

He and Techno ended up sleeping in the same room that night. They didn't speak, only sat in a worried silence, praying for the moment when Phil would come back upstairs, smiling, and telling the boys to meet their new baby brother.

And Kristin would be healthy, holding the baby in her arms, and then everything would be fine.

"I bet she's going to name him something stupid," Techno said, suddenly filling the silence, "Like Henry."

Wilbur snorted. "Better than Theseus."

"Theseus is a fine name!" Techno argued, "It's not my fault that the-that you have no taste!"

"Oh, I have taste, you're the one who needs to get your taste-buds checked."

Their banter died out quickly. Technically, they should be asleep by now, but Wilbur wasn't sure if he slept more than an hour that agonizing night. The same went for Techno, he was assuming.

Phil did eventually open their door, but he wasn't smiling. As a matter of fact, Wilbur was pretty sure he detected tear stains on Phil's cheeks, which sent his heart beating at the speed of sound.

"Boys," Phil whispered, "Kristin wants to see you."

Wilbur couldn't bring himself to speak as he stood up to follow Phil. Techno, however, spoke instantly.

"Is—"

"A boy," Phil interrupted before Techno could finish, "A healthy baby boy."

Phil did not sound nearly excited as he should over having a healthy baby boy. And Wilbur didn't miss the way Phil didn't mention *Kristin's* health.

They stopped outside Phil and Kristin's bedroom door, and Phil looked over to Techno.

"She-she wants to speak to you first, Techno," Phil whispered, sounding like he was about to shatter.

Techno wordlessly entered the bedroom, and Wilbur and Phil sat on the hallway floor, not exchanging a single word between them.

After what felt like hours, Techno entered the room. Wilbur snapped his head up to see him, and he was horrified to see that Techno was crying.

"Wil," Techno whispered, his voice choked, "Wil, she wants to speak to you."

Wilbur automatically stood up, walked across the hall, opened the door, and stepped into the bedroom. He froze at the sight before him.

Kristin looked *terrible*. Her face was as pale as parchment, and her hair clung to her sweaty face, and her breathing was nothing more than shallow, pained gasps.

“Hey baby,” Kristin whispered, still smiling despite her obvious pain, “Do you want to see your baby brother?”

It was only Kristin’s brave smile that gave Wilbur the courage to walk across the room and look down at the bundle of blankets in Kristin’s arms.

He looked weird. Squished. Like a rotten tomato.

“Isn’t he beautiful?” Kristin whispered, somehow still managing to sound so *adoring* even while she was gasping for breath.

No. Wilbur wasn’t sure he looked beautiful at all. But he didn’t want to tell Kristin that, so he simply said, “Sure.”

Kristin smiled, looking like she wanted to laugh but didn’t have the energy to.

“His name is Tommy.”

Tommy. That was a nice name for a little brother.

Wilbur nodded. “Tommy,” he repeated, still staring down at the squished bundle in Kristin’s arms. It was better than seeing how *wrong* Kristin looked.

“Wilbur...” Kristin weakly reached out for Wilbur’s hand, and Wilbur grabbed onto hers quickly. “I’m so sorry.”

Wilbur’s heart dropped, and he snapped his gaze back up toward Kristin.

“Why are you sorry?” he demanded, “Everything is going to be fine. You’re going to get better, and Tommy’s going to be the best baby, and everything will be *fine*.”

A tear slipped down Kristin’s face, and Wilbur had to swallow back the lump that rose in his throat.

“I love you so, so much,” Kristin said, gently squeezing Wilbur’s hand, “And you know I would never choose to leave you.”

Wilbur scowled. “There’s got to be something we can do,” he said, his voice choked, “There’s potions, right? We can—”

Kristin shushed him gently, still smiling. “It’s okay. It’ll be okay.”

“It won’t.” Wilbur’s voice was high-pitched now, and he was probably squeezing Kristin’s hand too hard. He immediately loosened his hold. “You’re supposed to *stay*.”

“I know. And I’m so sorry,” Kristin said, “But you are such a brave, and bright, and compassionate young man, Wilbur.”

Wilbur watched as another tear slipped down Kristin’s cheek. “Just... be there for your brother, okay? Know this isn’t his fault.”

It might be, Wilbur thought to himself bitterly, restraining himself from giving the wrinkly newborn a dirty look. He was the reason Kristin was sick, after all.

Still, Wilbur couldn’t take this away from Kristin, so as much as he wanted to scream and shout, to protest, to declare his absolute *hatred* of the baby that was about to take his mother away, he just whispered, “Okay.”

Kristin smiled with a nod. “Okay,” she whispered, “Why don’t you get your dad and brother, okay?”

Wilbur nodded silently, turning around and fetching Phil and Techno. They all ended up crawling into bed with Kristin, and Wilbur snuggled up against his mother’s fleeting warmth, allowing himself to fall asleep for the first time that night.

Wilbur must’ve slept like a rock, because the next morning, he woke up in his own bed. He scrambled out of the sheets, dashed to Phil and Kristin’s bedroom, and stopped when he saw Techno sitting outside the bedroom door, carefully holding a baby Tommy with tears flowing down his cheeks.

Wilbur’s world stopped.

He didn’t try to go into the bedroom. He didn’t want to see Phil, to hear what had happened, or prime forbid, see the cold, un-breathing form of his mother.

So instead, he sat down next to Techno, glaring down at the baby still sleeping in Techno’s arms as Techno continued to sob.

That was the last time he had ever seen Techno cry.

The next few months were a blur. They had a funeral. There were flowers. Everyone said nice things.

People said they were sorry for their loss, like they could possibly understand the horrible emptiness that Kristin had left behind, like they could possibly understand how the house was somehow too quiet even with Tommy screeching at every waking moment, like they could understand the dust that gathered on Kristin’s guitar, the way Phil could hardly speak some days, the way techno looked like he was about to say an inside joke before realizing there was nobody there who would understand it.

To be frank, Wilbur was numb. Techno had thrust himself straight into anger, training more fiercely and violently with Phil ever since the funeral. Phil had offered that Wilbur train too, but Wilbur wasn’t particularly interested in that. As a matter of fact, Wilbur wasn’t interested in much at all. He... didn’t know what to think, what to do, what to say. He moved through

life, hardly paying attention to what he was doing, hardly noticing as Tommy started developing over the months.

By the time it was Wilbur and Techno's eighth birthday, Tommy had long stopped crying at every waking moment; as a matter of fact, he was becoming capable of other sounds such as babbling and laughter, which he did quite a lot of, actually. Tommy also like grabbing things; Wilbur's hair was a prime victim of his chubby little fingers.

Techno's hair was also a prime victim, but Techno was training with Phil so often that there was less opportunity for Tommy to reach for it.

It was the first party they had without Kristin, and Wilbur would be lying if he said Phil didn't seem a little out of his element, a little detached from the situation. They still ate cake; they still sang a song; they still had presents.

It wasn't until Wilbur started trying to carefully unwrap Phil's horrible wrapping that the truth hit.

"I wrapped it. Phil can't be trusted anywhere around wrapping paper."

Wilbur burst into tears, hardly seeing the books he had requested for his birthday. Tommy began crying as well, and Wilbur and Techno ended up getting into an argument.

"It's been months, you don't get to burst into tears every time you see something that reminds you of her, Wilbur!" Techno had shouted.

Wilbur had sprung to his feet, slamming his hands against the table. "Oh yeah, at least I'm not pretending she never existed to begin with?"

Techno was practically spitting with fury now. "Are you kidding me? I knew her longer than you—"

"Oh, like you remember—"

"I *do*!"

"You were four! I barely remember anything from when I was four!"

"This isn't the point! You can't make us all miserable because you can't move on!"

"Move on? Techno, it's been five months!"

"Exactly!"

"*Exactly*, you haven't taken nearly long enough!"

"Oh, well I'm sorry that I'm not trapped in my own pity party—"

Wilbur's blood boiled. "Take that *back*."

“And if I don’t?”

Wilbur clutched his hands into fists, rage boiling underneath his skin. “I won’t hesitate to—”

“*ENOUGH!*” Phil shouted, slamming his own hands down at the table. Both Techno and Wilbur jumped, instantly silencing themselves.

There were tears streaming down Phil’s cheeks, and Tommy still hadn’t stopped crying.

It hadn’t been a good day.

But, in hindsight, Wilbur was pretty sure that was the moment he and Techno began to grow apart. Between that argument and the significantly more quality time Techno spent with Phil compared to Wilbur, their bond started getting sanded down until it was virtually nonexistent. Wilbur wasn’t even sure either of them had noticed when it happened.

Still, life continued on, and Wilbur continued on with it.

It took months for Wilbur to pick up the guitar again, and he was ninety-percent sure Phil’s eyes became glassy when Wilbur first tried to play the guitar for him. After that, Wilbur decided he’d not play the guitar in front of Phil. He didn’t want to make him miserable.

Besides, Tommy was a plenty avid audience member, even if he was too young and stupid to do anything particularly interesting.

It took months still for Wilbur to summon up the courage to visit Kristin’s grave.

The first time he visited, he ended up shouting, screaming at the air and demanding to know why Kristin had to leave him too. He had stormed off, feeling absolutely terrible about himself by the time he had gotten back home.

Wilbur had flung himself onto the couch, giving a still babbling Tommy a nasty look. Tommy, funnily enough, seemed to give Wilbur a nasty look of his own, babbling all the more fiercely.

It was not cute. It was *not*.

The next time Wilbur visited, he actually brought Tommy along for some inexplicable reason. Tommy sat in front of the tombstone, playing with the fresh flowers Phil had probably brought up and continuing to babble. Wilbur let Tommy say his piece before apologizing for yelling earlier and telling the air mundane facts about his current life.

Maybe Kristin could hear him from wherever she was. If she was anywhere at all, that is.

Wilbur liked to believe that she was somewhere happier, though. She deserved that much, at least.

And of course, there was the question of Tommy.

“*Isn’t he beautiful?*” Kristin had asked before she died, like it was the most obvious thing in the world.

As Tommy got older, everyone who didn’t know better said that Tommy looked just like his father, looked just like Phil.

Wilbur knew better, and he *hated* it.

Because Tommy may have Phil’s hair and Phil’s eye color, but he had Kristin’s smile and laugh. Wilbur saw Kristin in the way that Tommy furrowed his eyebrows when he was concentrating, or when he danced along to music.

He hated it because he wanted to deny to his dying day that Kristin was *right*, that Tommy was the most beautiful child he had ever seen, because Tommy was the one who took Kristin away. But every day, Tommy seemed more and more like Kristin, and every day, Wilbur loved and hated him for it.

But one day, when Wilbur was eleven and Tommy was three, they were out in the snow. Phil had left Wilbur on baby-sitting duty while he made hot chocolate for everyone, and Techno didn’t want to be bothered in going outside.

So, Wilbur found himself following Tommy, who was practically *shrieking* in excitement over the snow crunching underneath his boots.

“Wilby, Wilby, Wilby!” Tommy exclaimed, tugging repeatedly at Wilbur’s coat sleeve, “Let’s build a snowman!”

Wilbur huffed, letting out a visible cloud of air. Honestly, where did this child get all of his energy? Still, he helped Tommy create a snowman. And when Wilbur said ‘helped,’ he really meant ‘made most of it.’

When they were done, Tommy smiled proudly at their handiwork.

“What’s his name?” Wilbur asked.

Tommy had scrunched his eyebrows together in that very Kristin way and said, “Clarencio.”

Wilbur let out a startled laugh. “Pardon?”

Tommy scowled, and he did so in a very *Tommy* way. “Clarencio, that’s his name.”

Wilbur smiled this time, because wasn’t that just like Tommy? To just name something a completely random and slightly odd name he probably heard off the street?

“Clarencio is an odd name,” Wilbur said.

“No, it isn’t!”

“Yes, it kind of is.”

“Is not!”

Wilbur laughed again, ruffling Tommy’s hair. His hat must’ve fallen off at some point. “Okay,” he conceded, “Clarencio it is.”

And as Tommy smiled victoriously, Wilbur realized something.

He hadn’t thought about Kristin at all during most of that conversation. He never thought about how Tommy stole Kristin away, or how Tommy looked unfairly like her.

No. Wilbur had just thought of Tommy as...well, Tommy.

And the fact that Tommy took after his mother in so many ways, but it was different now. Because it was no longer *Kristin’s* laugh, or *Kristin’s* smile, or *Kristin’s* thinking face.

It was *Tommy’s* laugh, and *Tommy’s* smile, and *Tommy’s* thinking face.

Because Tommy was *Tommy*, not Kristin’s cruel replacement, not Kristin’s killer. Tommy was Wilbur’s little brother, the one he swore to love and protect, and Kristin was right.

Because he *was* beautiful.

Two years after that, Wilbur didn’t think much of the creeper hole that Phil had sealed over in their backyard. Phil had seemed worried about it, saying that somebody had to have been nearby to set off the creeper, but Wilbur had decided not to worry about it. Why should he, when nobody in his family was exploded?

Then he learned that Tommy was the one near that creeper, that he had brushed it off as a bad fall, that he was guilty about Kristin, that he thought Wilbur would *hate* him.

Wilbur may have hated Tommy once, but that time was long gone.

Tommy promised that he would never leave Wilbur, like it was that simple, like it was that easy.

And Wilbur swore to himself that he would protect Tommy until the day he died.

Maybe that was his downfall.

The years continued to fly by.

When Tommy was ten and Wilbur was eighteen, Phil and Techno started leaving on adventures.

Which was *fine*. It didn’t matter if Phil never asked if Wilbur wanted to come along, because somebody had to take care of Tommy. It didn’t matter if Phil left for weeks and sometimes months at a time, causing Tommy to ask Wilbur nearly daily if he had any idea when they were going to be home, because they were always home for birthdays and holidays.

It didn't matter if Wilbur felt a pang of anxiety every time Phil and Techno left, because they always came back, because they were doing what they loved, because they didn't deserve to be held back by Wilbur's clinginess.

Besides, it wasn't like there was radio silence. Phil would call at least once a week, and Tommy *lived* for those calls.

Still, a small part of Wilbur's heart festered in resentment, because Phil should be *there*, because Phil had only ever paid attention to *Techno* after Kristin died, because Phil was *leaving* Wilbur alone with his baby brother, expecting Wilbur to just have all the answers.

Things weren't all bad, though. Tommy made a new friend, Tubbo, and Wilbur found he enjoyed his company well enough, even if he kept sneaking through the window whenever Phil was home.

Still, by the time Tommy was fifteen and Wilbur was twenty-three, Wilbur was ready for something new.

So, they left. They packed their bags and went to the newly created Dream Smp. Tubbo tagged along, and Wilbur thought this was a new start, a new chance for Wilbur to finally see what was out there, to finally be appreciated, to finally have people who would *stay*.

And they had that, at first.

It was still hard. Wilbur had stopped visiting Kristin's grave as often as the years went by, and now that Wilbur had moved completely out, he still found himself wishing he lived near enough to make a quick visit, to tell Kristin about Tommy and Tubbo's shenanigans.

Wilbur had sworn to himself that he would never meet a woman more beautiful than Kristin, and that he would never have children. Because, as much as Wilbur loved Tommy, Wilbur would never forget how Kristin looked after Tommy's birth. Wilbur would never forget how terrible the first months were after her death, not that Wilbur still didn't wake up from bittersweet dreams with a hole in his heart.

But Sally proved Wilbur wrong.

He had met Sally on the nearby riverside, her tail sitting comfortably in the water. And she was the most beautiful thing that Wilbur had ever seen.

She was also a siren.

To this day, Wilbur wondered if his love for Sally was real, or if it was just an illusion by a siren song. At first, he was certain it was real. Sally had promised him that there had been no tricks, no deceitful melodies.

Wilbur had been wracked with anxiety when Sally became pregnant, and even more so when it turned out that the baby aged faster than human babies did. Before Wilbur knew it, Fundy came into this world.

And then Sally had left. After all the promises of love and devotion, after all of the assurances that this was real, that this wasn't deceit, it all turned out to be a lie after all.

It was too be expected of Sirens, and Wilbur cursed himself for being so naïve and love-struck in thinking it to be otherwise.

Still, Wilbur was building a life for himself with Tommy, Fundy, and Tubbo. Things were going well.

But nothing good could last forever.

A drug van became a nation, and a nation became a war, and war became death.

Wilbur loved L'manberg. It was something that was *his*. It was a nation that he could call his own. It was something that highlighted his achievements. His small nation loved him. They swore their loyalty, and Wilbur was happy.

Of course, there came the issue of founding a nation on a currently existing territory.

Dream was not exactly what one would call pleased.

One thing came after the next, and Wilbur was thrust into a war. And Wilbur found himself burdened with leading a country while simultaneously worrying for Tommy, Tubbo, and of course, Fundy, even though he had aged at an incredible rate and was now an adult. Fundy was Wilbur's son; no matter the age, Wilbur was going to worry. It was his job. It was better than abandoning him in the gutter or letting him die in a war.

As a matter of fact, Wilbur was going to make sure that as few as his men died as possible, and he was most certainly going to prevent Tommy, Fundy, and Tubbo from even coming close to death.

Life was a cruel mistress, however, and she had other plans.

Wilbur would never forget Eret's betrayal. The way Eret led them all to the final control room; the way the walls opened; the way Dream Team had slaughtered them all; the way Wilbur watched Tommy and Fundy lose their first lives thanks to someone Wilbur had called his *friend*, his fellow *countryman*.

So many people had left Wilbur before, but this was the first time he'd been actively *betrayed*. This was the first time Wilbur had *died* because of it. This was the first time Wilbur's brother and son had also *died* because of it.

Wilbur had always been cautious, not prone to trusting. But now he was even carefuller of who to trust, of who to put his faith in. Because never before had it occurred to him that betrayal and abandonment could result in his loved ones getting hurt as well.

Wilbur said he'd protect Tommy and Fundy, and he'd *failed*. They had both lost one of their lives.

He wasn't going to fail again.

But Wilbur couldn't be good for anything it seemed, because too soon after Eret's betrayal, Tommy challenged Dream to a duel.

And Dream *won*.

Wilbur thought he was dying as he saw the arrow plunge into Tommy's chest, as he saw Tommy to fall off of the bridge, as he saw the blood staining the water red.

Wilbur could barely breathe as they waited for Tommy to respawn, pacing around in such a frenzy that he was sure he had perturbed his country-men.

But that didn't matter because Tommy died *again*. Wilbur had failed *again*.

Wilbur had *failed*, and because of his failures, Tommy only had one life left. Tommy only had one more chance to live before he was gone forever, before he left the same way Kristin did.

And Wilbur refused to let that happen. Not again. Never again.

Tommy traded his discs for their independence, and Wilbur had never been more proud.

He proposed an election to make his presidency more legitimate in the eyes of the people. He invited Schlatt, who he had met before as Schlatt was passing through their old home.

It didn't occur to Wilbur that people would run against him. That Schlatt would run against him. That his own son would run against him.

Schlatt won. Schlatt exiled Wilbur and Tommy.

Wilbur grabbed Tommy—the one who had promised to never leave, the one who Wilbur had sworn to protect—and *ran*.

As they ran, Wilbur was shot through the heart. And the only thing Wilbur could think of was *what if that had hit Tommy, what if that had hit Tommy and he was dead forever, what if Tommy was dead?*

They founded Pogtopia, just Wilbur and Tommy against the world.

Tubbo had stayed with Schlatt. Fundy had disowned Wilbur. He watched as his son burned the flag of his once beloved nation and replaced it with a cruel twisted design. The walls of his nation, the walls meant to keep the people he loved *safe*, were torn down for the sake of expansion.

Everyone had left him. Between his parents, Kristin, Phil, Techno, Sally, Eret, Schlatt, Tubbo, Fundy...

The only one who was left was Tommy. Even if Tubbo claimed he was acting as a spy, Wilbur couldn't trust him. Tommy was the only one who had promised to stay and had

actually *kept* that promise. Sweet, loud Tommy was the only one Wilbur had in this world.

Wilbur couldn't let him leave. Wilbur couldn't lose him too.

Everyone else could die for all he cared. It was what they deserved, for casting him, for casting *Tommy* into the dirt.

They began to plan to take back L'manberg, to take down Schlatt. Wilbur slowly realized that they were technically planning an illegal government takedown, that they were technically terrorists, that they were now the *bad guys*.

And as the days, as the weeks continued on, it occurred to Wilbur that maybe everyone else *should* die. Maybe that twisted version of a country that used to be one of the things Wilbur held most dear should go down in flames, should be completely destroyed into rubble.

He struck a deal with Dream even though he still hated the man with a passion, even though Dream had all but taken both of his little brother's lives. Dream could help him destroy everyone who had dared touch his brother, and Wilbur was willing to make sacrifices for the greater good.

Dream didn't mind that Wilbur openly declared he didn't trust him. Dream said that he didn't trust anyone either. Dream agreed that nobody could be trusted.

Tommy didn't like the idea of destroying L'manberg, of destroying Wilbur's creation, of killing everyone inside. As a matter of fact, Tommy actively tried to *oppose* the idea.

And Wilbur saw it in Tommy's eyes. He saw the distrust starting to build, the shock, the horror, the fear.

Anxiety clawed at Wilbur's chest, a primal fear that had haunted him for years roared in his head.

Tommy was going to leave him, Tommy was going to leave him, Tommy was going to leave like everyone else.

How was Wilbur supposed to protect Tommy if he left? How was Wilbur supposed to take care of his little brother if Tommy wasn't there? How was Wilbur supposed to stop Tommy from dying if Wilbur wasn't around to do so?

Wilbur did everything in his power to stop Tommy from leaving. He made it clear to Tommy that *he* was the only one who cared about him. He tried to emphasize the fact that they couldn't trust Tubbo, that they couldn't trust Technoblade after he joined, that the only one Tommy could trust was *him*.

Because nobody else could be trusted. It was just Wilbur and Tommy.

But sometimes, Tommy refused to listen, refused to see the truth, and fear would try to drown Wilbur whole.

Tommy was going to betray him, Wilbur couldn't lose him, Wilbur couldn't let him leave him, Wilbur wouldn't let him betray him, Wilbur refused to let Tommy betray him.

That fear would cause him to tightly grip onto Tommy's wrist to make sure he was still there. That fear would cause him to shove Tommy when he got too bold, because boldness was the first step to rebellion. That fear would cause him to hit Tommy when he talked back, to forbid him from using potions, because *he was going to leave, and Wilbur couldn't let him leave, and Wilbur needed to teach him a lesson, Wilbur needed to make sure he wouldn't leave.*

And, *of course*, Wilbur would come in later, tending to the wounds that Tommy had sloppily applied bandages to. Of course, he would hug Tommy gently, promise Tommy that he still loved him, and Tommy would apologize and all would be forgiven. Because this *was* his brother, and Wilbur cared about him more than anything in the world.

But it was the only way to make the lesson stick. It was the only way to ensure that Tommy wouldn't leave him, because Wilbur wouldn't—*couldn't* live without him.

And he would destroy anyone who had ever tried to take him away.

Chapter End Notes

So, I decided to stop here, and we'll get to see Wilbur's actual mind processes during this actual fic in the next chapter, Wilbur Interlude Part Two.

Um... kinda scared of posting this tbh, so please, i ask you this every time so i trust you, but be nice in the comments.

Thank you for reading, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

Wilbur Interlude Part 2

Chapter Summary

Wilbur's thoughts through the entire plot of the story so far. <3

Chapter Notes

tw: suicidal thoughts, trust issues, abandonment issues, manipulation, amputation, torture, ptsd, child abuse, gaslighting, talks of explosions, self-harm, smoking, nonconsensual drug use, broken family relationships

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

And one day, everything changed.

It was the early hours of the morning, early enough that Wilbur knew for certain Tommy would still be asleep. He was a teenager, after all, and even if he had participated in a war that required one to be alert and ready to spring from sleep at any moment, Tommy was unlikely to be awake at three am.

So, as was always part of Wilbur's sleepless-night routine, he walked to Tommy's bedroom, ready to just peek inside and make sure that Tommy was still there, that Tommy hadn't snuck out in the middle of the night, that nobody was trying to assassinate him, that Tommy was still safe and sound.

And most nights, Wilbur would find Tommy safely in his bed, safely asleep, looking more peaceful than Wilbur ever saw him in waking hours. Some nights, however, Tommy would be having a nightmare of some sort, and Wilbur would have to wake him up, would have to comfort him, would have to assure Tommy that everything was alright.

This time, however, Wilbur heard Tommy gasping for breath before he even reached the door handle. He sounded like he was in agony, he sounded like he was being choked to death, he sounded like he was *dying*.

Panic overtook Wilbur like a supercharged creeper about to explode, and he burst through the door of the room, ready to slaughter anyone who dared tried to attack *his* brother.

But there was no one. It was only Tommy, sitting up and curling in on himself, completely unable to breathe. Wilbur immediately ran up to him, unsure of what to do.

“Tommy?” he asked, “What’s going on in here?”

Tommy’s eyes were closed, and Wilbur wondered if his little brother was even awake at all.

“Wilbur?” Tommy whispered, as though the world had tilted on its axis, as though Wilbur didn’t visit Tommy *every* time he had a nightmare.

Still, Wilbur grabbed Tommy’s shoulder, hoping to ground Tommy, hoping to help his brother return to his ordinary self.

“Yeah, it’s me. Another nightmare?”

Tommy opened his eyes, looking up at Wilbur.

And then he froze.

Wilbur braced himself, praying that Tommy wouldn’t be a fool, that Tommy wouldn’t make some rebellious remark, that Tommy would understand that Wilbur was the only one in this wretched world that would help him.

“I don’t get nightmares,” Tommy said, his voice wavering like it had when Wilbur had caught him sneaking downstairs when Tommy was six, “I’m a big man, Wilbur.”

Oh. Tommy was scared. The truth must’ve finally hit, and now he was scared.

Wilbur caressed cheek lovingly, and Tommy didn’t even scowl. As a matter of fact, he *leaned* into the motion.

“Oh, Toms,” Wilbur whispered, “We both know you’re just a kid behind that bravado.”

And then Tommy did something Wilbur never thought Tommy would ever do again.

He *hugged* him.

And not one of those quick, awkward hugs or one of those side hugs. No. Tommy practically *flung* himself onto Wilbur, holding him more tightly than Wilbur had even deemed possible.

And Wilbur was once again reminded of a simpler time when Tommy was smaller, and Wilbur was happier.

Tommy was afraid. Tommy was clearly deathly afraid, and Wilbur needed to comfort him.

“What was it about?” Wilbur asked, keeping his voice comforting.

Wilbur spotted tears forming at the corners of Tommy’s eyes, and Wilbur hugged Tommy all the more closely.

“Dream was there,” Tommy said, “And Schlatt.”

Wilbur stiffened. *Schlatt*. That monster who had kicked Wilbur and Tommy out of Wilbur’s country and twisted it into something unrecognizable and cruel. Even thinking about Schlatt

made him recall how an arrow had taken away his second life, how Tommy had almost died, how they were now trapped in this *damn* ravine...

And then Wilbur realized that Tommy had stiffened in his arms, and Wilbur decided to have mercy just this once, since Tommy was feeling so vulnerable.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Toms," Wilbur said gently, like he used to when they were young, "But let's not talk about that man, okay?"

Thinking about Schlatt made Wilbur's rage boil over, and it wasn't actually all that pleasant.

Tommy nodded, and eventually Wilbur forced himself to remove himself from the hug.

"Come on," he said, standing up, "Breakfast and then time for work."

To be honest, Wilbur thought that would be the end of it. That would be the end of that wonderful moment, where things had temporarily gone back to the way they were back when Tommy was younger, back when they weren't trapped in a ravine.

And Wilbur had thought correctly it seemed. Because later that day, Wilbur spotted Tommy pulling out his communicator. Why would he be pulling out his communicator? Who was Tommy messaging? Why was Tommy messaging them?

Tommy wanted to leave; Tommy wanted to betray Wilbur; Tommy wanted to leave and never return.

Wilbur grabbed Tommy's wrist, and Tommy jumped, like he was trying to do something he shouldn't.

It wasn't fair. Wilbur had already lost so much; Tommy couldn't leave him; Wilbur wouldn't let him leave.

"What are you doing?" Wilbur asked, unable to keep some of the anger out of his voice.

"I was just going to message Phil," Tommy said, like he wasn't casually talking about something Wilbur had made very clear was unacceptable, "I thought he might want to know how we're doing."

No. Tommy was going to run away with Phil; Phil was going to take Tommy away; Phil was going to kidnap Tommy; that couldn't happen; that wasn't fair; Tommy was the only one Wilbur had.

Panic overcame Wilbur, and he twisted Tommy's wrist, taking the communicator out of his hand.

"I thought I told you we can't trust anyone," Wilbur said sternly, hoping against hope that this time Tommy would get the message, "Remember, Toms?"

"I wasn't going to call for him," Tommy tried to defend, "I just thought he wanted to know if we were doing okay. That's not a crime, is it?"

Phil didn't give a crap. If he wanted to see how they were doing, he would've come to help with the first war. But Phil didn't care about Wilbur or Tommy, only Technoblade. Wilbur just wished that Tommy would *understand* that for once in his life.

And there was that rebellion in Tommy's tone, like he was getting sick of Wilbur only trying to *protect* him like he promised.

Wilbur scowled, unable to keep his face passive.

"I'm only trying to protect you, Tommy. Phil doesn't care about us."

Tommy shuddered, and Wilbur hated to see his little brother like this. But Tommy needed to learn that Wilbur didn't need to be feared, that Wilbur was the only one who cared about him, because everyone else would beat him and leave him to rot if he left, and Wilbur couldn't stand the thought of him leaving in the first place, and—

"Phil *does* care, though."

Phil didn't care. Phil didn't care at all. If Phil had *cared*, he wouldn't have left Wilbur to take care of Tommy when Tommy was only ten. If Phil had *cared*, maybe he would've paid Wilbur a bit more mind after Kristin died.

Just thinking about it made Wilbur hold Tommy's wrist all the more tightly, because thinking about Phil just reminded Wilbur of all the things he hated.

Why couldn't Tommy just drop it?

"*Tommy*," Wilbur snapped.

Tommy flinched, and Wilbur let go of Tommy's wrist almost instantly. Tommy clearly understood now; there was no point in taking things farther than they needed to.

Still... Tommy couldn't be trusted with his communicator, not if he was going to be trying to run away with it.

"I think I'll hold onto this for now," Wilbur said as he dropped Tommy's communicator into his pocket, "There's no one you can trust that isn't already here anyway."

Maybe Tommy would finally get the message this time.

Wilbur had run into Technoblade as he was storming off.

"Hey, Wilbur," Technoblade said.

"I'm not exactly in the mood to talk, Technoblade," Wilbur said in a frustrated tone, "Tommy *still* won't understand that I'm just trying to protect him, so I've been forced to take away his communicator, and—"

Technoblade started demanding to know why Wilbur had taken the communicator, like he actually *cared* what happened to Tommy to begin with.

Of course, Technoblade wouldn't understand; Technoblade had always been the golden child, always got his way, never knew what it was like to actually *lose*.

Not in the same way Wilbur did.

Then Wilbur remembered that Dream was coming over. Tommy always got extra rebellious whenever Dream was around. And Wilbur understood how Tommy felt, he truly did. Some days, Wilbur wished nothing more than to rip the man limb from limb for being the cause of Tommy's first two lives being lost.

But Dream was a necessary evil. Tommy couldn't see that.

He told Technoblade to warn Tommy to behave himself.

In his distraction over Dream and Technoblade suddenly deciding to care about Tommy for the first time in his life, Wilbur had completely forgotten about the swelling that formed in his brother's wrist.

So, it never occurred to him to wonder later why Tommy's wrist was as good as new the next day.

Speaking of the next day, it was actually a bit strange.

Dream came as he always did, supplying Wilbur with more TNT and giving Wilbur more information on Manberg. There was nothing particularly new going on, except that the festival planning was going swimmingly.

The strange bit was *Tommy*.

Because every time Dream came to Pogtopia, Tommy was *loud* and *rebellious* and an all-around problem.

But today, Tommy had hardly said anything at all.

"Tommy's been awfully quiet today," Dream had said casually.

Wilbur forced down the roaring protective instinct that roared in his chest. As much as he hated Dream, he had to keep up appearances and not tick him off if Wilbur wanted that TNT.

Besides, it *was* nice to know that Tommy was finally behaving himself.

So instead of glaring at Dream, Wilbur smiled warmly at Tommy, thanking him for being good.

And then Dream had to *ruin* it, like Dream always does, by making some stupid comment about being exiled.

And while Wilbur allowed some of his anger to show, replying that Tommy would *never* be exiled again, Tommy actually started *backing away*.

And Wilbur had always known that Tommy was afraid of Dream, but never had Tommy ever openly showed it in front of anyone, much less Dream *himself*.

And yet, after a hilarious comment on Dream being homeless, Tommy all but *fled* the scene.

It was strange, but a nice change compared to Tommy pointing a crossbow at Wilbur. That had been terrifying.

Tommy had learned that night to *never* try to aim a crossbow at Wilbur again.

Now that Tommy was gone, Wilbur and Dream continued their conversation, and Dream actually had something rather important that he really should've mentioned earlier.

"Schlatt's planning on killing Tommy," Dream said, "At least, that's how the rumor goes."

No.

Wilbur's heart began racing, almost as if it were trying to dash to Tommy itself, almost as if it were desperate to see that he was okay, that his baby brother was okay, that Schlatt hadn't gotten to him.

Of course, Schlatt was trying to take away the one thing Wilbur still had. Of course, Schlatt would try to rip Tommy away from him in that way. Of course, Schlatt would force Wilbur to watch as Tommy gasped for breath, as Tommy struggled to stay smiling despite the pallor of his skin, as Tommy apologized for leaving before his time.

"Not happening," Wilbur growled, pressing back the thought. Tommy was fine. Tommy was safe. Tommy was here in Pogtopia.

But Wilbur couldn't see him, what if he left, what if he was trying to leave, what if Schlatt had sent men after him even as they spoke?

"I'm sure you won't let it happen," Dream said, shrugging as though this wasn't Wilbur's *little brother* they were talking about.

The communicator in Wilbur's pocket vibrated loudly, and Wilbur sighed, pulling the item out of his pocket. It wasn't his communicator, he realized; it was Tommy's.

Still, he gave Dream a suspicious glance before tilting the communicator in such a way that Dream couldn't actually see the contents. Wilbur didn't trust Dream with his own personal affairs, and there was no reason that he should trust Dream with Tommy's.

Tubbo: Hey Tommy, how are you doing?

Wilbur frowned. What was Tubbo doing? They had agreed not to use communicators for communication in case Schlatt had Tubbo bugged. And while Wilbur couldn't trust Tubbo, he had at least been good about that particular aspect of being a spy, so why was he throwing that away now?

Tubbo: I have some really good news! J'schlatt is going to revoke your exile! You can come back and stay!

What? What was Tubbo talking about? There was no way in hell Schlatt would just *revoke* Tommy's exile, especially after Dream just told Wilbur that Schlatt had been planning to kill Tommy. What was going on?

Tubbo: this probably seems sudden, haha

Tubbo: Schlatt's trying his best, I think things are going to change for the better around here.

Oh. Of course. Wilbur should've known. Wilbur *had* known.

Tubbo was a traitor. A good and proper one now, not one hiding behind saccharine lies that Tommy ate whole. Tubbo had openly declared that he was supporting Schlatt, which by extension meant that he was against Wilbur, which meant that he couldn't want anything good for Tommy.

Wilbur gritted his teeth and thrust the communicator back into his pocket. He wanted to scream; he wanted to rage; he wanted to burn something.

But Dream was still standing right in front of him, and Wilbur would rather not humiliate himself in front of him. Wilbur would rather not give Dream fuel that he could later use against Wilbur.

So instead, Wilbur burst out in hysterical laughter, because of course, Wilbur would still be this shocked by something he had seen *coming*. Couldn't exactly be betrayal if Wilbur hadn't trusted Tubbo on *some* level.

Wilbur would do better next time. He'd keep a more wary eye on Techno.

"Something wrong?" Dream asked pleasantly, clearly not seeing the absolute *fury* Wilbur was in.

"Nothing I can't handle," Wilbur hissed, "Just another proper traitor to add to the list."

"Oh, do you mean Tubbo?" Dream nodded. "I heard that he was getting closer to Schlatt, but I kind of assumed that it was just a ruse to get more information."

Wilbur clenched his hands into fists so tight that he knew that his fingernails were going to cut skin. He honestly couldn't bring himself to care.

"Yeah, well you thought *wrong*."

"Guess I did," Dream agreed, "Honestly, I didn't peg Tubbo to be onboard with the whole killing Tommy plan that people keep talking about, but I guess the kid likes the power."

The mention of Schlatt's plan to kill Tommy made Wilbur's skin crawl. The idea that Tubbo would be in on it was somehow a worse betrayal than the simple fact that he's been on Schlatt's side this entire time. Tommy trusted Tubbo, despite all of Wilbur's attempts to

convince Tommy that it wouldn't be worth it in the end, and Wilbur somehow still found himself hurt on Tommy's behalf.

Maybe now Tommy would finally believe him. Maybe now Tommy would stop forming attachments that were only ever going to get him hurt. Or god forbid, *killed*.

Tommy *couldn't* die.

"Well, if Tubbo ever happens to try anything, I'd be more than happy to get him off your hands," Dream said casually, "Or help you with whatever you've got planned."

Wilbur glared. "I'm perfectly capable of handling things on my own."

"If you say so." Dream started walking away. "I'd just hate to see anything happen to Tommy; I know you have a soft spot for him."

Of course, Wilbur had a soft spot, Tommy was his brother.

"Just get out," Wilbur snarled, stopping himself from saying some proper expletives.

Dream was already half-way up the stairs out of Pogtopia.

"I'll see you later, Wilbur."

Wilbur didn't indulge Dream with a response. Instead, he spun around and started toward the direction Tommy had fled in. He needed to find Tommy; he needed to make sure that Tommy was safe.

It took a surprisingly long time for Wilbur to find Tommy amidst the rather expansive cave system that Tommy had created in his quest to find more ores and minerals for Pogtopia's cause. Every dead-end Wilbur ran into made his heart spike; every minute without Tommy's security safely planted in Wilbur's mind made him want to scream and cry and kill anyone who dared speak to him.

Fortunately, nobody was there to speak to him.

By the time Wilbur had found a man-made cave system that looked slightly fresher than the others; Wilbur (or Tommy, technically) had received more messages from Tubbo.

Tubbo: ...Tommy? Are you alright?

Tubbo: Did I say something to upset you?

Tubbo: I'm sorry.

Tubbo: Tommy, please answer, I'm getting worried.

Wilbur held back a derisive snort. Was Tubbo still playing at friendship after what he blatantly admitted? How in the world did Tubbo expect Tommy to believe that Tubbo still had one shred of concern for Tommy's well-being? Sure, Tommy was naïve when it came to

these sorts of things, but surely even Tommy could see that Tubbo didn't care at all, even despite their past friendship.

Their past friendship.

That's when Wilbur realized. Tommy wouldn't see Tubbo's suspicious news of Schlatt letting Tommy back into L'manberg as treachery or betrayal. Tommy would *believe* Tubbo. Tommy would fall for Tubbo's lies just like Wilbur fell for Eret's.

Wilbur couldn't let that happen.

But Tommy wasn't going to believe Wilbur if Wilbur simply told him about Tubbo's betrayal. Tommy would have to see the evidence for himself.

So, Wilbur did the only reasonable thing; he deleted the majority of the messages, leaving behind the most incriminating ones.

A small part of him felt uncomfortable at the action, but he quickly squashed it down. Wilbur needed to do this. Wilbur couldn't let Tommy fall for Tubbo's trap. Wilbur couldn't let Tommy die.

Wilbur finally found Tommy in the middle of a panic attack. Wilbur thought he was going to die as Tommy continued struggling to breathe, as Tommy tried to make himself smaller, as Tommy seemed so very *unlike* Tommy.

Eventually the fear became too much, and Wilbur snapped at him, demanding that Tommy pull himself together. Tommy obeyed, and relief flooded Wilbur like a drug.

Tommy was frightened. That much was obvious. Dream had scared Tommy out of his wits.

It made sense, all things considered, but Wilbur still felt unease stir in his chest at the way Tommy seemed so small, so vulnerable.

Still, it was nice that Tommy could rely on him more, that Tommy had stopped talking back as much, that Tommy seemed to crave Wilbur's affection in a way that he hadn't two days ago.

It was different, but Wilbur wasn't so sure that was necessarily a bad thing.

Wilbur then told Tommy about Tubbo's betrayal, a smile forming on his face. Because now Tommy would finally understand, and Tommy wouldn't leave, and Tommy would be *his*.

It didn't take long for Tommy to accept the truth, although Wilbur could see how much it hurt him. Wilbur understood that horrible, gut-wrenching feeling. That pure and utter horror one felt when they realized that they had been abandoned, that they had been left behind, that their trust had been thrown in the dirt and then stomped on.

"I tried to warn you," he said, truly meaning it.

"I know," Tommy only replied before storming off to his room. Wilbur didn't try to stop him.

Wilbur encountered Techno in the kitchen and explained what had happened. They ended up getting into an argument over Wilbur's treatment of Tommy.

By the time Techno had stormed out of the kitchen, Wilbur was fuming. How dare he say that Wilbur was hurting Tommy? He was *protecting* him. Wilbur was doing what was absolutely necessary to keep Tommy safe. Wilbur only ever played rough when it was absolutely necessary.

But, of course, Techno wouldn't understand that.

As a matter of fact, Techno had only been acting more and more suspiciously these past couple of days. Wilbur needed to keep a better eye on him. The last thing he needed was to not realize that Techno was in on Schlatt's plan to kill Tommy until it was too late.

Eventually, Wilbur decided that he wasn't going to get much done simply raging in the kitchen, so he left the room in a hurry, hoping to maybe catch Technoblade and to confirm where his loyalties truly lay.

He was hardly three steps into the hall when he heard shouting.

The only two words he could make out were "*No Tubbo!*"

That was *Tommy's* voice.

Wilbur's heart stopped.

Not bothering to try to hear any of the words being said, Wilbur spun around and sprinted toward Tommy's bedroom. Rage boiled underneath his skin. How dare Tubbo sneak into this place? How dare Tubbo try to hurt Tommy in the one place Tommy was supposed to be *safe*? How *dare* he?

Wilbur slammed the bedroom door open, and his eyes zeroing in on Tommy and Tubbo.

Tommy was still unharmed. Thank god.

And, to make matters better, Tubbo was *unarmed*. What sort of shoddy assassination attempt was this?

But wait... this was *good*. This was *excellent*. Wilbur had the upper-hand. Wilbur could take advantage of this.

So he smiled, giggling in a slightly undignified manner.

"Well, well, who do we have here?"

And, not letting Tubbo say a single word in his defense, Wilbur grabbed him by the arm and yanked him away from his baby brother, slamming him against the wall.

“Wilbur!” Tommy shouted, “Let him go!”

Wilbur glared at Tommy, because he had been *so close* to understanding, but now he was back to defending the little traitor.

Fortunately, Tommy shut his mouth swiftly, so clearly he was not completely against Wilbur.

But Wilbur finally understood. Tubbo hadn’t come here to kill Tommy, not directly at the very least. Tubbo had come here to manipulate Tommy, to lie to him, to convince Tommy that Schlatt was safe, that Wilbur was the true villain all so that Schlatt could kill Tommy as soon as he left.

Well, two could play at that game. How badly would Schlatt feel if Wilbur killed his precious secretary of state?

Well, there was only one way to find out.

Right before Wilbur finally did the deed, however, Technoblade interrupted. And for half a moment, Wilbur thought it had all but confirmed his treachery.

But then Technoblade proved Wilbur wrong.

“It’ll have less impact if you do it now,” he said, “Give Schlatt a rendezvous. Make Schlatt think he can save him, and then kill him right before he succeeds. That’ll hurt him a lot more than killing him now.”

Now *that*, that was the most brilliant idea Wilbur had heard from Technoblade this entire month.

Not that Wilbur wasn’t still wary of him. He would be a fool to think that this necessarily meant that Technoblade was still on Wilbur’s side, especially with how outspoken he had been lately.

Tommy hadn’t liked Wilbur keeping Tubbo hostage. Clearly, Tubbo had said some things that had thoroughly convinced Tommy that he meant well.

Perhaps it had been a mistake to delete the messages. Now that Tommy was aware that Wilbur had done so, the action had only truly served to weaken Tommy’s trust in him than to strengthen it.

Fortunately, Tommy had not *lost* his trust in Wilbur. Wilbur could still regain control of the situation.

And he did. By the end of the night, Tommy was asleep in Wilbur’s arms.

Wilbur nearly cried for joy as Tommy cuddled closer into his chest. How many years had it been since Tommy had done this? How many years had it been since Tommy wasn’t embarrassed to fall asleep in Wilbur’s embrace, in Wilbur’s protection.

Wilbur smiled fondly down at Tommy, ignoring Tubbo's pointed glare in his direction. It seemed that Tubbo's hold on Tommy was not strong enough.

Tommy was still *Wilbur's*.

The next morning, Tommy woke up from a nightmare and promptly had a panic attack, which nearly sent Wilbur into a panic attack, and it was an all-around unpleasant experience for everyone involved.

After Wilbur finally managed to calm Tommy down, Wilbur called Schlatt, excitement thrumming in his veins. There was a certain thrill that came with knowing vengeance was about to be served.

Schlatt reacted with proper horror, and Wilbur could not help but to be very pleased with the situation.

For some odd reason, Quackity took the line near the end of the call, which was a lot less thrilling and a lot more frustrating as Quackity got into an argument on *morality* of all things, as though Quackity hadn't *enjoyed* watching Wilbur and Tommy be chased out of their own country.

But it was no matter. Wilbur's message was delivered. Wilbur was all but certain that Schlatt would attempt to stage a rescue, and Wilbur would be waiting with Tubbo when he did.

After the call, Wilbur carried Tubbo and led Tommy to the kitchen, where Technoblade seemed to be having some cooking troubles.

"What happened in here?" Tommy asked.

Technoblade shrugged awkwardly. "Breakfast gone wrong."

Wilbur laughed as he dropped Tubbo on the ground, finally freeing himself of the heavy weight.

"That sounds like you," Wilbur said, recalling the time Technoblade put baking powder instead of baking soda in a batch of cookies back when they were seven.

It didn't particularly matter to Wilbur if they had no breakfast; Wilbur hardly ate much anyway these days. He mostly just ran on coffee. Of course, the breakfast issue would have to be amended for Tommy's sake, but for now, Wilbur was perfectly satisfied in walking across the room and pouring himself a cup of coffee from the coffee pot.

As Wilbur did so, however, Technoblade began staring at him very strangely, immediately rousing suspicion in Wilbur.

"What are you looking at?"

“Looking at? I’m not looking at anything,” Technoblade said, “I was just... ah, lost in thought. Yeah, lost in thought, that’s right.”

Yeah, now Wilbur knew for certain that Techno was lying.

“What were you thinking about?” Wilbur tested.

“Nothing,” Technoblade said quickly, glancing to the side.

If Technoblade was going to betray him, couldn’t he at least try to be subtle about it? This was truly pathetic.

“You’d better not be thinking of betraying me, Technoblade,” Wilbur threatened, pointing at Technoblade violently. Because there would be *hell to pay* if Technoblade tried to betray Wilbur and threaten Tommy.

Technoblade actually raised his eyebrows at that, having the gall to act confused.

“Betray you? Why would I betray you? I hate government, remember?”

A decent point, but not quite good enough for Wilbur’s tastes.

Still, Wilbur was tired, and he needed some caffeine in his system before he could deal with any of this. He picked up his mug and quickly downed his coffee.

When he was done, however, he grimaced. There was a strange aftertaste, nearly completely hidden by the bitterness of the drink. And why did he suddenly feel so dizzy?

“What was in that coffee?” He muttered, glancing down at his mug in confusion, “I feel so ___”

Then the truth hit him like a truck. No *wonder* Technoblade was staring at him so strangely as he was pouring his mug.

Wilbur took a step toward Technoblade, hating how he nearly stumbled. “Technoblade, you damn—”

The next thing Wilbur was aware of, his face was pressed against the cold, stone ground.

“Did you hear that?” someone asked. Wilbur was pretty sure it was Technoblade. What had happened again?

“What is it?” Tubbo’s voice whispered.

Oh, yes. Wilbur remembered now, angering boiling in his veins. Technoblade had betrayed him. Technoblade had *drugged* his drink.

“You two stay here,” Technoblade said, “I’ll go check it out.”

Wilbur pried his eyes open, and he saw Technoblade rushing from the room.

“Are you seriously just going to leave us here?!” Tommy was shouting as Wilbur pulled himself to his feet, “We can help too you-you know...”

Tommy trailed off when he saw Wilbur, still leaning against the wall for support. But Wilbur only had eyes for Tubbo, who was standing only a few feet away from Tommy, staring up at Wilbur with wide, fearful eyes.

Good. He should be afraid.

Wilbur pulled his sword out of his inventory and pushed himself off of the wall, ready to push the weapon straight through Tubbo’s chest and *end this*.

Tommy stepped in front of Tubbo, blocking Wilbur’s path.

No. No.

Wilbur glared, pointing his sword at Tubbo, who Tommy was standing directly in front of.

“Step out of the way, Tommy,” Wilbur commanded darkly.

Tommy flinched, but he didn’t move.

“No,” he said, “You can’t kill Tubbo.”

Wilbur couldn’t believe this was happening. No, this *couldn’t* be happening. Tommy was *his*.

So why wouldn’t he just listen?

“What is with today?” Wilbur shouted, practically begged, “First, Techno! Then, *you*, Tommy!”

Please say it’s not true, please say he won’t leave, please move so that Wilbur could end this and Tommy can be safe again.

He spotted two unexpected arrivals in the doorway. Not only were they unexpected, but they were pointedly *unwanted*.

Especially when Wilbur spotted his traitor of a son hiding behind Quackity.

“And now you two come in,” he said, making sure to line his words with every ounce of bitterness he had in his body, “And my traitor of a son is here too. I suppose this is just a happy reunion.”

Oh well, maybe Wilbur would get to kill them all in one go. The thought made him smile.

Fundy, however, did not seem pleased. “Dad, please—”

“You don’t get to call me that anymore!” Wilbur shouted, the angry beast in his chest rising up once more, “You don’t get to call me that after you sided with *him*.”

“Schlatt’s respected me more than you ever had!” Fundy shouted back, “And besides, I’m pretty sure *he* would never actively try to kill children!”

And now his own son was trying to lie to his face like he was some sort of gullible moron.

“He’s trying to kill Tommy!” Wilbur shrieked, holding back the tears that so wanted to come, “He’s been trying to kill Tommy this entire time!”

“Nobody is going to kill Tommy! We just want to stop *you* from killing Tubbo!”

Oh yeah, like Wilbur was going to believe *that*.

“Like I’m supposed to believe that after you *left* me!”

In the brief silence, Wilbur heard Quackity arguing with Tommy and Tubbo, trying to take them away. Wilbur immediately moved his sword so that it was resting Quackity’s neck.

“You’re not taking them anywhere,” Wilbur whispered.

Quackity told Fundy to leave with Tubbo, and Wilbur felt relief flood his body when Tommy made it clear that he wanted to stay. Tommy didn’t want to leave; Tommy wasn’t leaving. Tommy wasn’t so far gone.

That didn’t mean that there wasn’t going to be punishment for Tommy’s disobedience later, but at least Wilbur knew that Tommy was still his, that Tommy didn’t want to go.

But first, Wilbur had to kill Quackity; he had to send at least some form of a message while Tubbo and Quackity went scot-free.

But then Tommy got down on his knees and *begged*, swearing his undying loyalty. At first, Wilbur didn’t trust Tommy to keep the promises he so clearly believed, but as Tommy continued begging, Wilbur found that it was impossible to say no to his baby brother’s tears.

So, Wilbur took the sword off of Quackity’s neck.

Quackity instantly slammed Wilbur into a wall and punched him in the face. Wilbur barely had any time to recover himself before his skull burst in pain and everything went dark.

“Wilbur, can you hear me?”

Wilbur opened his eyes, groaning. He peered at the person hovering over him, but the only thing he could make out was a blurry smiley-face. What?

“Yeah, you have a concussion,” the person who Wilbur had had not yet identified said, “Take this potion.”

Wilbur was helped to a sitting position, and the stranger—*Dream*, Wilbur suddenly recalled—pressed a potion into his hand. Wilbur unsteadily uncorked the cap and downed the

magical liquid.

Almost instantly, Wilbur's head cleared, and he leapt to his feet, stumbling in an undignified manner.

"Where's Tommy?" Wilbur demanded glaring at Dream as he stood up.

"Wil—"

"*Where's—Tommy.*" This time, Wilbur made his voice a threat, a promise of death if Dream didn't tell him where Tommy was right this second.

Dream sighed. "He was taken," he admitted, "by Manberg."

No.

Wilbur instantly began pacing the room, his hands gripping at his hair like a life-line. *Tommy couldn't be taken; Tommy couldn't be gone; Tommy was his; Tommy was all Wilbur had; Tommy couldn't leave...*

"I tried to stop them," Dream continued, sounding apologetic, "I really did—"

Dream stopped talking as Wilbur began laughing hysterically, a few tears running down his face.

This wasn't funny. Nothing about this was funny. But Tommy was gone; Tommy was taken, and Wilbur didn't know what to do.

"This is what I get, isn't it?" Wilbur said bitterly, "For daring to ally with Tubbo, for daring to trust *Technoblade*—" He spat out Technoblade's name with venom. "—and now he's gone."

"I do have some good news," Dream said.

Wilbur rounded on Dream, growling. "How is anything about this *good?!*" he screamed, "I am without allies! My brother has been taken away from me! And I am *alone!*"

"Actually..." Dream held a finger up. "I captured Technoblade for you."

Wilbur paused his pacing, looking up at Dream with shock. "What?"

Dream's mouth—the only part of his face left visible by his mask—tilted into a crooked smile. "I captured Technoblade as he tried to help the others kidnap Tommy."

This... this was *good*. In a single move, Dream had just drastically weakened Manberg's forces. Techno was the only one who could ever hope to win in a fight against Dream, and now here Techno was, in *Wilbur's* hands.

They could use this.

Wilbur grinned. “Dream, you sly—”

“No need to thank me,” Dream interrupted quickly, “And I’d love to go over the details, but Manberg knows our location.”

Dream was right; Manberg definitely knew where Pogtopia was. It was frankly a miracle that the military wasn’t knocking down their door.

“We need to leave,” Wilbur commanded, “You take Techno; I’m going to grab a few supplies. We’ll find somewhere else to make a plan to get Tommy back and blow that damn country to smithereens.”

Dream nodded and left obediently. Wilbur glared at his back as he went. He didn’t trust Dream by a long shot, and he never would. But at the moment, Dream was his only “ally.” Wilbur needed to take advantage of that while he could, at least until he got Tommy back.

The move to the new base wasn’t too difficult. It was the making of the base that was the tricky part. They had to dig underground quickly as to not be spotted by Schlatt’s patrols, and then they actually had to decide on design.

Dream mentioned that the problem with Pogtopia was that it was easy to get in and out if you knew where the entrances are. Wilbur decided that the hall-way system in this new base should be more like a maze. That way, nobody could escape, and nobody come in and steal from him anymore.

After making the first initial halls, though, Wilbur quickly carved out a room and dumped a tied-up Technoblade in there. He still had yet to wake up from the nasty blow that Dream gave him, but Wilbur would be ready when he did.

When Wilbur’s base was mostly completed, Wilbur considered his next steps.

“We can threaten Technoblade,” he muttered, “We could hold him as ransom to get Tommy back.”

“They’ll know it’s a bluff,” Dream said calmly, “Technoblade is our only bargaining chip at the moment. If we kill him, we won’t have anything left to work with.”

Wilbur hated it when Dream was right.

“Fine,” Wilbur snarled, “What do you suggest?”

Dream shrugged. “I just think that maiming sends a bigger message than outright killing.”

Wilbur nodded to himself. “Maiming can also be repeated,” he muttered, “It’s a better investment.”

“I’ve heard cases where someone has sent hair or a finger to the enemy as like a warning,” Dream said his voice sounding as if he was thinking out loud more than actually suggesting

something.

That... that was actually a really good idea. Wilbur could do that. Wilbur could cut off one of Techno's fingers and send it to Schlatt. And while Schlatt was a heartless individual, surely even he must care if Wilbur was permanently maiming one of his best fighters.

He could get Tommy back.

Wilbur laughed. "You know what?" He said, "I'm going to do that."

And that's exactly what he did. Technoblade wasn't usually one to show weakness, so the grunt of pain that came out was actually rather satisfying.

Wilbur didn't feel guilty as he brought the knife down. Technoblade deserved this for what he did to Tommy. Technoblade deserved this for what he did to Wilbur.

Besides, it was just a finger. Technoblade would live after he was reunited with his precious *Manberg*.

So much for hating governments.

Of course, then came the issue of actually sending the finger. It wasn't exactly like either Wilbur or Dream could send it through proper mailing, not with security and their lack of a proper address.

"George would probably do it," Dream said, "But I don't know if you want to trust him. I know you don't trust me still, so I'd understand if you'd want to make the delivery yourself."

Wilbur frowned, drumming his fingers against the table they had placed in the center of their meeting room. Dream wasn't wrong; Wilbur didn't trust him, and he certainly didn't trust George.

...but, this might be the only viable way to save Tommy. Wilbur was feared by all of the citizens of his own country thanks to Schlatt, so there was no way he'd get ten paces into Manberg without being spotted and arrested on sight. And even if he got *in*, the chances of Wilbur managing to get the package to Schlatt was next to zero.

And Dream had been rather transparent about the trust issue, so it was unlikely that he would betray Wilbur in this particular instance.

Wilbur sighed. He would have to take the chance. It was the only option.

"Fine," he said through gritted teeth, "You can give it to George, but I want a call from Schlatt within the week."

Dream smiled and nodded. "Of course."

Apparently Dream got the call from Tubbo on the sixteenth. As proof, Dream showed Wilbur his call history, and there was indeed a past call from Tubbo.

Unfortunately, Wilbur could not participate in said call because he was preoccupied by something else.

Actually, to be more specific, he was preoccupied by *someone* else.

Because while Wilbur was participating in his daily bout of pacing, praying that Tommy wasn't hurt, that Tommy would return to him soon, Schlatt would be willing to hand Tommy over for Techno's sake, his communicate started ringing.

Wilbur immediately yanked it out of his pocket. Finally, Schlatt had called him. Finally, Schlatt was ready to bargain.

But upon looking at the caller id, Wilbur realized that it wasn't Schlatt. As a matter of fact, it was the last person Wilbur would ever expect receiving a call from.

It was Phil.

Wilbur glared at the screen of his communicator. He shouldn't reply, he should hang up, he should ignore Phil just like Phil used to ignore him.

But, for some inexplicable reason, Wilbur clicked call instead.

"Phil?" He asked, his voice still unsteady from the shock of receiving the call.

Wilbur heard a sigh of relief on the other end. "Hey Wilbur."

Oh god. It was actually Phil. Phil had actually called him. Why? What was Phil doing? Phil had ignored all of the other crap that was going on in Wilbur's life. Why the hell was he calling now?

"Phil, what-what are you-why are you calling me?"

Why was Wilbur's voice still so damn unsteady? He didn't owe Phil anything.

"Why wouldn't I call you?" Phil asked, having the gall to sound *confused*, "You're my son Wilbur. I want to check in on you."

What a joke. Not only was Phil going to uncharacteristically call him, but he was going to lie to Wilbur as well?

"You haven't called this entire time," Wilbur hissed, "Why are you calling me now?"

A sigh. "Listen, Tommy called—"

Tommy. Oh god, Tommy.

“Tommy?” Wilbur asked instantly, not caring that he was cutting off Phil’s pathetic explanations, “You talked to Tommy? Where is he?”

If Phil cared about how Tommy was doing, he would tell Wilbur exactly where Tommy was being held. If not, then Wilbur would know where Phil’s true loyalties lied.

“He’s safe,” Phil said, “He’s safe, but I’m worried about you, Wilbur.”

Worried? Phil hadn’t been worried about Wilbur in years.

And besides, ‘safe’ was not nearly close to an adequate answer concerning Tommy’s location. If Phil really wanted to hide the truth from Wilbur, he should’ve said he didn’t know, not give such a vague response.

“If he’s safe, why won’t you tell me where he is?” Wilbur demanded, slamming his fist against the stone wall next to him, “You’re with them, aren’t you? You’re with Schlatt! You have Tommy captured, you can’t do that, he’s mine, you can’t—“

“Wilbur,” Phil interrupted, “Tommy is not captured. He’s being well taken care of. He called me because he wants you to get help.”

Why did Phil keep lying? It wasn’t going to work. Wilbur wasn’t gullible and naïve like he once was. He wasn’t like Tommy.

“Don’t lie to me,” Wilbur growled, “You never wanted to help me before, I twas always about Techno, your *prodigy*. And then you never call while I’m away, and now you’re keeping Tommy away from me. You don’t want to help me, you’re trying to ensnare me in a trap, you’re trying to kill me—“

Phil’s voice was slightly louder when he interrupted Wilbur yet again. “No. I’m not trying to kill you, and I do want to help you, Wil. I’m worry if you felt that I was prioritizing Techno over you, I never meant to make you feel that way, but—“

No, no, no, Wilbur didn’t want to hear it; Wilbur didn’t want to fall for his lies; Wilbur wouldn’t be betrayed again. Phil didn’t love him; Phil had never loved him; anything Phil was saying now was *false*.

“Shut up! Shut up!” Wilbur screamed, “Stop *lying*! You never loved me, stop pretending to now!”

“I’m not lying,” Phil said softly, “I love you. I love you so much.”

Wilbur couldn’t breathe. This wasn’t right, this was wrong, this was a lie, Phil was lying, Phil didn’t love him, he needed to leave, he needed to *end this*—

Wilbur ended the call, practically breaking the button under the force of his thumb.

Gasping for breath, Wilbur rested his head against the wall. It was over; it was done; he wouldn’t have to worry about falling for Phil’s lies.

Not moments later, his communicator started vibrating again. Wilbur tiredly glanced at the caller id, hoping that it was Schlatt and not Phil.

Phil.

Wilbur scowled, slamming his thumb down on the 'decline' button violently. He shoved the communicator into his pocket and pulled out a cigarette. He really was too old for this crap.

His communicator started vibrating again. This time, Wilbur forced himself to ignore it. Maybe Phil would get sick of calling him back if he had to wait for longer.

When the communicator stopped vibrating, Wilbur let out a breath of relief. Finally, finally, Phil might leave him alone now.

More vibrating.

Wilbur shouted in frustration, yanking the communicator back out of his pocket and clicking Phil's contact information. He promptly blocked Phil's number before returning his communicator to his pocket.

He waited.

Finally, blissful silence.

Wilbur let out a sigh of relief.

And yet... Phil's words seemed to repeat inside the echo-chambers of his mind.

"I love you. I love you so much."

Wilbur groaned, pushing himself off the wall, ready to get himself a cup of coffee or even just a bottle of scotch. Actually, maybe he could blow off some steam with Techno; that sometimes used to work when they were kids. Maybe then, Phil could stop tormenting him.

He encountered Dream on the way down the hall, and Dream explained that Schlatt had finally called. Apparently, he agreed to do the rendezvous with Tommy, but not until a week from now.

Wilbur scowled. "That gives them time to prepare," he snapped, "Why can't we have it sooner?"

"I tried to get it sooner, I really did," Dream said, "But look at it this way, it also gives *us* time to prepare. Not to mention Schlatt won't step out of line this entire week out of fear of what we'll do to Techno."

"It also gives them more time to *find us*."

Dream laughed. "You really think they're going to be able to find us when *you* created this place?"

It was true that Wilbur was rather good at creating secret bases. Still, Wilbur wanted Tommy back as soon as possible, and he wasn't sure how long he was going to manage waiting an entire week for his baby brother to be returned. Schlatt could be doing anything to him right now, and Wilbur was just expected to sit here patiently for an entire week?

"I don't like this." Wilbur pulled out another cigarette, fumbling with the lighter. "You don't have any idea where he could be held? I would rather take him back myself so I can blow the hole place to smithereens as soon as I'm done."

"I don't know where," Dream admitted, "I tried to see how much Gogy knew, but he said Tommy's location was highly classified."

Wilbur clenched his hands into fists. How dare he? How dare he do this to his Tommy?

Images of Tommy being tied up in a torture chamber underneath the white house flash across Wilbur's mind, and Wilbur squeezed his eyes shut. It only made the image more vivid.

"I want to kill him," he muttered, trying to press out the gruesome thoughts still intruding upon his mind, "I want to kill him and scatter his remains so that nobody could ever find him."

"You're a smart man," Dream said calmly, "I'm sure you can think of something. I've heard of people who have plant explosives *in* someone out of the desperation to destroy something from far away."

Huh, a human bomb. A bit of a risky affair, to actually put an explosive *in* a human or hybrid body. What's to say that the explosion won't go off while *you're* near your experiment?

Still... the idea had merit. Maybe if there were a way to discretely get a mine on Techno without him noticing, preferably without the surgical aspect, Wilbur could destroy Manberg from the inside.

Of course, it wouldn't be a near large enough explosion compared to the one Wilbur had previously planned, but that couldn't exactly be helped. He wasn't an idiot. He knew that Schlatt and Tubbo must've dug up the TNT, and as helpful as Dream was, he wasn't an endless source of explosives.

Wilbur continued his quest to Techno's cell, leaving Dream to do whatever he had planned.

Beating up Techno *was* actually a good way to vent out his frustrations. Sure, it was mildly unsettling that Techno could do nothing to fight back except glare, and in a way, it only made Wilbur angrier. Why was Techno looking at him like he was an idiot, like he was the bad guy? Techno was the bad guy; *Techno took Tommy away from him; Techno deserved this—*

Wilbur's phone started ringing, and Wilbur dropped Techno onto the ground, ignoring the impulse to wince as his once-brother collapsed onto the ground with a loud thump.

Swearing, Wilbur wrestled the communicator out of his pocket, giving the caller id such a furious glare that if it were sentient, it would've coiled away at the sight.

It wasn't Phil. It was Schlatt.

Thank god.

Wilbur eagerly answered, bringing the communicator to his ear.

"Hello, Schlatt," Wilbur said, grinning, "Did you like my gift?"

The person on the other end was definitely *not* Schlatt.

"Wil, it's me—" Like that was specific. "It's Phil. Listen, Wil, you need help, please let me help—"

Wilbur hung up and threw his communicator at the wall with a guttural scream. Why couldn't Phil just leave him alone? Why did Phil have to keep *lying*?

It was a trap; Phil was just trying to trick him and kill him; Phil was helping Schlatt keep Tommy captive; it was a trap; you can't trust him, you can't trust anyone—

"I love you. I love you so much."

Wilbur was so confused; it didn't make any sense; nothing made sense anymore...

And then it hit him. Phil was trying to throw down his walls, right? Phil was trying to catch Wilbur off guard, was trying to trick him, right?

Well, what if Wilbur played along? What if Wilbur pretended that he was falling for Phil's trap, that he *so* wanted help, that he was as ridiculously naïve as everyone thought he was?

Because then, Wilbur could get in close. Because then, Wilbur could stab Phil through the stomach, ending his traitorous life once and for all. And that would be one less ally for Schlatt. That would be one less thing Wilbur had to deal with in his crapstorm of a life.

It was *brilliant*.

Unfortunately, Wilbur did not manage to enact his master-plan anytime soon.

Mostly because he forgot about it promptly after receiving a call while he was downing yet another mug of drugless coffee.

It was from Schlatt again. But, of course, the last time a call was from "Schlatt" it was really Phil in disguise, so Wilbur will have to be forgiven if he replied with a certain venom that was not what one might call polite.

"I swear Phil, if this is you, I will—"

"Wil?"

That wasn't Phil.

That was *Tommy*.

Wilbur's heart beat against his chest, bursting with such a swirl of emotions that Wilbur could hardly tell right from left. And, for a moment, Wilbur just sat there, trying process what just happened.

"Tommy?"

"Yeah, it's me." Tommy sounded so tired, so broken when he spoke that it made Wilbur want to scream and cry and hold his baby brother close all at the same time.

"Tommy, Toms, baby, how are you talking to me?" Wilbur could barely get the words out fast enough. "Did you escape? Why do you have Schlatt's communicator?"

Apparently, Tommy stole Schlatt's communicator, which only raised a whole other plethora of questions for Wilbur, but he held them back. It was far more important that Wilbur figure out Tommy's location first.

But Tommy very suddenly changed the subject.

"Do you trust Dream?"

Where had that come from?

The answer was obvious. Wilbur didn't trust anyone, so of course, Wilbur didn't trust Dream. Dream was a tentative ally, nothing more. He *didn't* trust him.

But Wilbur could understand Tommy's concern, seeing that he had a deep-set fear of Dream recently.

"Oh, Toms, I don't trust anyone," Wilbur said confidently, "I know he scares you, but Dream's been incredibly useful as of late, so I'm allowing him to help me for now."

"Dream's lying to you," Tommy replied as if he had an in-depth conversation over Dream's lies with Dream himself, "He doesn't want to help you."

Honestly, Wilbur couldn't give a damn over what Dream wanted as long as Dream continued to help Wilbur.

He really wished that Tommy would just drop it.

"The moment he betrays me, I'll discard him," Wilbur said impatiently, "Honestly, Tommy, I'm just doing what's best."

And then Tommy started shouting.

"You're not using him!" Tommy shouted, "He's using you! Why won't you see that? The only thing Dream wants is *me*! But you're so up in your head 'oh, I'm Wilbur, I'm going to trust this idiot in a mask because he said he'd—'"

“You’re being ridiculous,” Wilbur snapped back in frustration, “I frankly don’t care what Dream wants. He’s willing to help me get you back, so that’s all that matters.”

“Aren’t you listening to me? He wants *me*. He’ll steal me away from you before you can blink! Why are you trusting him?!”

No. No, Dream was helping Wilbur get Tommy back; Dream wasn’t planning to take Tommy away. Besides, what would Dream even want with Tommy? It didn’t make any sense.

Tommy was just being paranoid, and Wilbur was sick of it.

He successfully managed to get Tommy to shut up on how Dream was apparently trying to work against Wilbur, and while the idea wasn’t unlikely, the idea of Dream working against Wilbur to take *Tommy* was almost nonsensical. Dream had no reason to want Tommy, not like Schlatt did.

Still, maybe it wouldn’t hurt to just keep a slightly closer eye on Dream.

Tommy switched the subject over to Techno, and Wilbur wondered why Tommy knew that Techno was getting hurt at all. Of course, he definitely didn’t know about the finger; Tommy would either be far more pleased or far more upset over Techno instead of this neutral middle Tommy has seemed to have adopted.

But Tommy kept demanding what was so different about Techno, why Wilbur hated Techno so much, and Wilbur couldn’t help but to burst out saying,

“Because you’re the only thing I have anymore, Tommy!” Wilbur shouted, his heart beating rapidly, “You’re the *only* thing! Fundy’s gone, *L’manberg’s* gone, and you’re all I have left. You’re my only reason for living right now, so I *swear*—”

“You’ve thought about killing yourself?” Tommy interrupted.

Wilbur froze.

Because in all honesty, yes, Wilbur often thought about it. He wondered how easy it would be to simply drink too many potions and fall asleep in his bed. He stared at his sword and wondered if it would hurt to simply stab himself in the chest. He looked at Dream and wondered if he would even care if Dream stabbed him in the back.

But he always pushed those thoughts out of his mind, because Tommy needed him.

“I-I don’t—*god*, Tommy. Yeah, I guess I have. What of it?”

“If-if I were to jump off this roof right now, would you kill yourself?”

Wilbur’s heart stopped.

“Are you on a roof?!” Wilbur all but shrieked, jumping to his feet, “Tommy, Tommy, get down from there right now. Wilbur’s coming for you. Please, get down, get down, Tommy, get down *right this instant*, why aren’t you answering me *damnit*!”

He needed to save Tommy; he needed to save Tommy; *what was he doing on a roof; why was he on a roof; why did he want to jump; god what had Schlatt done to him—*

“I’m not going to jump,” Tommy muttered, cutting through Wilbur’s thoughts, “I was just asking. I’ll try again. Would you kill me if you planned on killing yourself?”

What... what sort of question was that?

Wilbur would admit that sometimes he thought about it, that sometimes he thought about what would happen after he blew L’manberg to the ground, that sometimes he wondered if he’d even want to live after that, even with Tommy.

And... maybe he considered taking Tommy with him to death.

But Wilbur was never going to admit it out loud.

“Where are you Tommy?”

Tommy told him that he was on the roof of the *White House* before hanging up suddenly.

Wilbur panicked. He needed to get to Tommy, but how was he supposed to get there when he was sitting on the most secured building in L’manberg?

Wilbur punched the wall, letting out a cry of pain.

As Wilbur paced and punched the wall and fantasized over things to kill, the words Tommy had said jostled around in Wilbur’s mind like an annoying jar of coins that someone wouldn’t stop shaking.

“He’s using you!” “The only thing Dream wants is me!”

Tommy was probably forced to say that, Wilbur realized. Wilbur had no idea that Tommy wasn’t forced to say all of those things at knife-point.

And yet...

Tommy was right. Wilbur had been lowering his guard around Dream. He’d have to be extra vigilant from here on out.

Wait a moment. What was Wilbur even *doing* here? He was wasting time, Tommy *needed* him.

Completely without a plan, Wilbur began stumbling down the hallway. He needed to get to Tommy, he needed to—

Wilbur was jolted out of his thoughts upon seeing Technoblade shuffling down the hall on his knees, very much *not in his cell*.

“What the hell...” Wilbur muttered, trying to comprehend the sight before him. Then, he scowled. “How did you get out?”

Technoblade shrugged.

Wilbur snarled in frustration. Why couldn't things be simple for once?

Grabbing a knife out of his inventory, Wilbur ran toward Technoblade, tossing the knife toward Technoblade's skull.

Instead, Technoblade raised his arms so the knife landed on his bindings instead. Wilbur growled and pulled out his sword, ready to slice Technoblade in half.

But before Wilbur quite knew what was happening, he was pinned to the ground, and Technoblade was holding a knife to his throat. Technoblade's eyes were filled with such fury that Wilbur didn't doubt that this would likely be the last thing he ever saw.

And in a moment of hysteria, Wilbur recalled those old foam swords he and Techno used to spar with, back before everything had gone to crap, back when they were simply children.

Wilbur wasn't sure if he wanted to laugh or cry at the thought.

"Are you going to kill me, Techno?" Wilbur asked, accidentally using his once-brother's nickname.

Technoblade looked so close to doing it, and Wilbur honestly welcomed the thought. There was no point in living without Tommy, and by the looks of things he wouldn't be around for much longer anyway.

Wilbur was about to fail for the last time.

"It doesn't quite matter anymore, since Tommy seems to be about ready to throw himself off the roof anyway."

At least Wilbur wasn't being killed by Dream or Schlatt. At least, Wilbur was being killed by somebody he used to call his friend; at least his last sight could be of somebody he used to call his brother. Maybe Wilbur could even muster up the courage to pretend that Techno still cared about him, that things weren't the way they are now, that Wilbur was still six, playing pretend in their backyard.

But the knife piercing his skin was real, and Wilbur was about to breathe for the last time.

And Techno didn't love him. Not anymore.

"I love you. I love you so much."

Wilbur dully wished that Phil could shut up in his last moments.

A strange expression flashed across Technoblade's face, and suddenly he was releasing the knife from Wilbur's throat.

What was Technoblade playing at?

“What are you doing?” Wilbur demanded, glaring at Technoblade.

“I’m not going to kill you, Wilbur,” Technoblade said, as though things were that simple, that easy, “Stay down and I won’t hurt you at all.”

No, no, that didn’t make sense; that wasn’t supposed to happen. Technoblade was supposed to want Wilbur dead; Wilbur was supposed to die; he wasn’t supposed to be granted *mercy*.

Technoblade began standing up, but Wilbur was too confused, too *angry*, to just let him leave without a fight.

So, Wilbur leapt to his feet, slamming himself into Technoblade. They both collapsed onto the floor, Wilbur having Technoblade pinned to the ground, although Wilbur was sure Technoblade could free himself in an instant.

“What the hell is wrong with you? What is wrong with *everyone*?”

Tears were escaping from Wilbur’s eyes, but he just didn’t *understand*. Nobody cared about him, nobody loved him, so why was everyone pretending that they gave a crap now?

Technoblade stared up at Wilbur with an unreadable expression, and Wilbur hated it.

“I don’t know, Wilbur,” Techno said, “Maybe we’re just trying to help you.”

“I love you. I love you so much.”

No, no, no, no. Techno was lying to him again. Techno was doing the same thing Phil was doing. Techno was trying reel him before he took the kill.

But Techno already had his opportunity to take the kill, so why hadn’t he?

Wilbur didn’t like this. Wilbur didn’t like this at all.

“Stop *lying*!” Wilbur screamed, reaching for a sword so that he could at least temporarily end the lying before he figured out how to properly exploit it.

As Wilbur suspected, Technoblade easily kicked Wilbur off of himself, and Wilbur had the gall to hope that maybe this would be the end as Technoblade rammed the sword-pommel into his skull.

Wilbur once again woke up to see Dream’s smiley-face mask hovering over him.

He didn’t say anything as he downed the health potion that Dream had thrust into his hands. As a matter of fact, Wilbur chose not to say anything until he was standing steadily back onto his feet.

Meanwhile, Dream looked strangely calm about all this.

“Technoblade?” Wilbur asked, his voice hoarse.

“I got him,” Dream said, crossing his arms and leaning against the wall casually, “I cut his arm off too, so that should stop any escape attempts.”

Prime, his *arm*.

Why did Wilbur’s stomach churn at the thought? Was it because he couldn’t bear the thought of losing a limb like that? But he had cut off Technoblade’s finger with no remorse.

Of course, Wilbur was never about to admit to any of that.

“Why didn’t you cut off a leg?” Wilbur asked instead, confused, “Wouldn’t that have been better for preventing escape?”

Dream shrugged. “It’ll be easier to make the exchange if one of us doesn’t have to carry him.”

Wilbur nodded. That made sense, he supposed.

But still... something about this did not sit right with Wilbur at all.

“He’s using you!” “The only thing Dream wants is me!”

Wilbur gave Dream a suspicious glance. “Well, good work, I suppose,” he said, “I think I shall speak to our renewed prisoner—”

“He’s still unconscious,” Dream interrupted, “And I think he managed to escape because of frequent visits, though I’m not entirely sure.”

Dream made an interesting point. Maybe Wilbur *should* keep visiting at a minimum.

Wait a moment. When did Wilbur start listening to what Dream said?

For some odd reason, Wilbur waited for Dream to exit the building before he decided to sneak—no, not sneak, simply enter—Technoblade’s cell.

Technoblade was still out cold, just like Dream said. And, just like Dream said, his right arm was missing.

It felt wrong, seeing the empty space where Technoblade’s arm used to be, almost as if Wilbur was seeing an incomplete puzzle.

But it was of no matter, because Wilbur had not come to feel remorse over something that he didn’t even do, especially after everything Technoblade had done. Wilbur came for answers; Wilbur wanted to know why Technoblade didn’t kill him and let him be with Tommy, who... who was probably not dead. Schlatt wouldn’t be so foolish and let his favorite prisoner die if he had already spent nearly a week choosing not to kill him.

It didn't stop the anxiety from clawing up his throat, practically ready to tear Wilbur apart from the inside.

Wilbur wasn't sure how long it took for Technoblade to wake up, but when he did, he didn't seem to notice his lack of an arm immediately.

When Wilbur finally told Technoblade to just look at his arm, Technoblade stared at the space his arm used to be with an expression of pure shock.

Wilbur had never seen Technoblade look so shocked before in his life.

Wilbur chuckled. "Yeah, I was surprised too," he said, "I asked Dream why he hadn't cut your *legs* off, much more practical to deter running in my eyes, but he said that he had his reasons."

Technoblade didn't glare, or make a smart comment, or threaten Wilbur. Instead, he just continued staring at his bandaged stub.

"And does Dream know about your visit?" Technoblade asked, looking up at Wilbur.

What was everyone and *Dream* lately? Why did it matter if Dream was involved in every single little thing he did or not?

"No, why should he?" he asked, "I'm the one in charge; I can do what I want."

"Oh yeah?" Technoblade asked, raising his eyebrows, "Then how come you're acting like you did whenever you tried to sneak out at night?"

Wilbur was not sneaking around. Just because Wilbur chose to visit Technoblade after Dream left had nothing to do with anything. Wilbur was in charge around here, not Dream. Wilbur doesn't have to listen to a thing Dream said, even if Dream was objectively more likely to win in a fight against Wilbur, even if Dream was Wilbur's only hope of getting Tommy back safely.

"Dream is not controlling me. He is *not*." Wilbur jumped to a standing position, running his fingers through his hair. "You're trying to turn us against each other, you're trying to confuse me, you're trying to manipulate—"

"Like you did to Tommy?" Technoblade interrupted, "Because I hate to break it to you, Wilbur, you have done the each and every one of those things to him."

No, Wilbur didn't manipulate; he just did what he had to do to make sure Tommy would stay; it wasn't *manipulation*.

Wilbur walked toward Technoblade, ready to make that very clear. "I *didn't*—"

"You didn't what?" Technoblade said, raising his voice, "You didn't try to turn Tommy against his best friend? You didn't confuse him with the way you hurt him in one second and dote on him in the next? You didn't manipulate him into thinking that it was *fine*, because at least you cared about him?!"

No, no, no, it was necessary, it had to be done, it wasn't abusive, it wasn't wrong...

Wilbur grabbed Technoblade by the scruff of his shirt, lifting him a few inches off of the ground.

“Don’t—” Why was his voice choked? Why did he feel like he was about to cry? “—I didn’t; I was just doing what was best for him; it was for the best.”

It *was* for the best.

Right?

“Yes, actively sending him my finger so that Dream can taunt and manipulate him is definitely what’s *best* for Tommy,” Technoblade spat, looking like he would kill Wilbur if he could, “Glad to see we’re on the same page.”

Wait, what?

Wilbur dropped Technoblade in shock, too distracted to even notice the way he unceremoniously landed on the stone floor.

What was Technoblade talking about? Dream said that Schlatt received the finger, not, not Tommy. Tommy was in prison, how...

“What?” he whispered, his voice cracking.

“Yeah, that’s right,” Technoblade said, “Your pal Dream has a vendetta against our baby brother—”

“*My* baby brother,” Wilbur corrected. Because Tommy was his, not Technoblade’s.

“*Our* baby brother,” Techno said again, “Tommy doesn’t *belong* to you, Wilbur.”

No, Tommy was his; Tommy was Wilbur’s. Technoblade didn’t get to claim stake in him after everything he’s done. Technoblade didn’t get to do that.

“I was there for him, and he was the only one there for me.” Wilbur leaned against the wall, once again running his fingers through his hair greasy hair. “We’re the only ones we have.”

“It sounds like you’re trying to convince yourself more than you’re trying to convince me,” Technoblade said condescendingly, “You want me to be your therapist or something? Because I don’t have much left to do here.”

Wilbur was not here to be condescended to by Technoblade, of all people.

“I didn’t come here to justify myself to you.”

“Then why did you come?” Technoblade asked, “Did you come to mock me? Torture me?”

“No, actually,” Wilbur snapped, now frustrated from the proceedings of the earlier part of their conversation, “I wanted to know about *this*. ”

Wilbur pulled a knife out of his inventory, though he made it look like it came out of his cloak for dramatic effect, and dropped it to the stone ground. It wasn't the same knife that Technoblade nearly killed him with, but it got the point across.

Technoblade stared at the knife.

“You wanted to ask me about a knife?” Technoblade asked, “What do you want me to say? It's sharp, it's good for stabbing people, typically a murder weapon...”

At least Wilbur knew that Technoblade was not a complete idiot.

“*Exactly!*” Wilbur exclaimed, gesturing at Technoblade dramatically, “You had me at *knife-point*, Technoblade. You could've ended it all right then and there.”

“True,” Technoblade said, “It was pretty tempting, I have to admit.”

“Then why didn't you?” Wilbur asked, frustration bleeding into his voice, “You could've *ended* it, and I know you wanted to, but you *didn't*. *Why?*”

Wilbur massaged his eyes, not looking up to see Technoblade's reply.

Technoblade let out a loud sigh. “Because I care about you? Because you need help? Because Tommy would never forgive me if I did it? Because I don't want the blood of my own brother on my hands?”

That didn't make any sense. Technoblade didn't care about him; Technoblade shouldn't *care* about killing Wilbur.

Wilbur began pacing the room again, putting his face in his hands. “That's not... that's not how... you're lying.”

Why did it feel like *Wilbur* was the one who was lying?

“If you're not going to believe me, fine,” Technoblade said, sounding impatient, “But at least know that Dream has no intentions of reuniting you with Tommy and never has.”

Nothing made sense anymore. Wilbur wanted to go back to when things made sense, to when he knew that Tommy was the only one who cared, the only one he could completely trust.

“I hate you.” Wilbur was crying again as he glared at Technoblade. “I hate you so *damn* much.”

“Okay, Wil,” Technoblade whispered, “You keep telling yourself that.”

After that conversation, Wilbur had another quote to join the echo chamber inside his head.

“*Tommy doesn't belong to you, Wilbur.*”

It was about an hour after Wilbur's conversation with Technoblade when Dream came back.

Except Dream wasn't alone. He had...

"Phil?" Wilbur asked, his voice hoarse from shock upon seeing his once-father being held at sword-point by Dream.

Phil looked at Wilbur with a defeated expression, but somehow, he managed to smile.

"Hey, Wilbur," he said softly, "How have you been?"

"I love you. I love you so much."

Wilbur scowled before remembering something.

"Is Tommy alive?" he asked, practically begged, "Because he was on the roof and I thought he might've dived off, and please tell me he's alive, please—"

Phil nodded. "Tommy's alive, Wilbur," he replied, still smiling, "He's safe."

But he wasn't safe. He was with Schlatt. So why did Phil keep lying?

"I think I'll escort Philza to his new cell," Dream said sweetly, "If that's alright with you, of course."

"He's using you!" "The only thing Dream wants is me!"

Wilbur nodded mutely, watching as Dream led Phil away.

He wanted Tommy.

"Tommy doesn't belong to you, Wilbur."

Wilbur didn't know how to feel anymore.

Chapter End Notes

FINALLY, i finished this after 12k words.

The next chapter is going to be so short in comparison but it be like that sometimes.

I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments (i am once again insecure), and thank you for reading! <3

Awesamdad Finally

Chapter Summary

i don't even know i'm still rebounding from being done with the wilbur interludes

lol, ok, in all seriousness, tubbo is sad, schlatt is stressed, and sam is now the resident man out of the loop

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, referenced past alcoholism, implied/referenced child abuse, stress, explosives, referenced amputation

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo's ears were ringing

"You were nice."

Those words rang over and over in Tubbo's head as he watched Tommy storm down the street back toward the White House, Clementine and the new dog following him.

Someone was talking to him, Tubbo dully realized. They were saying something; Tubbo should probably pay attention.

"—true that President Schlatt has hurt you in the past?"

Tubbo turned his head in the direction of the reporter staring at them blankly. "Pardon?" he asked, his tongue feeling heavy. His ears were still ringing.

"You were nice."

The reporter frowned. "Is it true that President Schlatt has hurt you in the past?"

Yes.

"No comment," Tubbo said automatically, turning his head back toward the direction stormed down just in time to see Tommy round a bend.

Another reporter rushed up to his other side. "How is Dream involved in this conflict?"

“Is TommyInnit still allied with Wilbur Soot?”

“No comment,” Tubbo said again, staring at the spot where Tommy had disappeared from view.

Suddenly remembering what his legs were for, Tubbo pushed past the reporters, dashing after Tommy. Tubbo needed to apologize, Tubbo needed to do *something*—

Prime, Tubbo knew Tommy wouldn’t like to hear that they were hiding Technoblade’s supposed location from him; Tubbo knew that this wouldn’t go over well.

And yet Tubbo still went along with it.

“You were nice.”

They were just trying to *protect* Tommy. Tubbo just didn’t want to see him get hurt again.

It was a little ironic, come to think of it.

Tubbo quickened his pace, hoping that he could catch up with Tommy before he did something he’d regret.

Regret wasn’t a pleasant sensation. Tubbo would know; he seemed to have a lot of it.

Schlatt felt dread sink in when Quackity looked up from his seat in the situation room.

“We’ve lost all communications,” he said, “And tracking is offline.”

This was an issue. This was more than an issue. This was a catastrophe. Dream had Phil. And not only that, but they had no idea where to even begin to find him or Technoblade. Well, they had one lead, but after finding Phil, it was only a matter of time before Dream once again moved locations.

Prime, how was he going to explain this to Tommy?

Schlatt swore, sinking into his seat at the head of the conference table. “What do we know?”

“Dream attacked him, sir,” said one of the men writing down the entire conversation between Dream and Philza.

“Okay, yeah, I figured out that much, thank you,” Schlatt said, “Do we have our scouts converging on the location?”

“Yes!” called out a woman currently on her own communicator from across the room, “They spotted both Dream and Mr. Minecraft, but both became invisible before anyone could verify where they were headed.”

Schlatt rested his head in one of his hands while massaging his racing heart with the other. God, he could really go with a drink right now.

“So, we’re back where we started,” Schlatt muttered.

“Um, Schlatt?” Quackity said, glancing back down at his communicator, “Sam’s here. Do you want to stay here, or—”

“No, I trust you to handle this,” Schlatt said, pulling himself to his feet, “I’ll go speak to Sam.”

In all honestly, it was a bit of a relief to have an actual excuse to escape the panic at the moment.

Schlatt’s heart was still beating uncomfortably against his chest as he approached his office, where Awesamdude was waiting patiently outside of the door.

“Schlatt,” Sam said, his voice unreadable, “I’ve come to deliver what you requested.”

Schlatt nodded. “Why don’t you come in?” he asked, gesturing to the inside of his office, “I have a few questions if you don’t mind.”

“That depends on what the questions are,” Sam replied, nevertheless following Schlatt into the office. Schlatt shut the door behind him.

“Alright, well, first things first, I guess,” Schlatt said, settling himself back behind his desk, “You said you have that communicator?”

Sam nodded, grabbing the device from his pocket. “For Tommy, right?”

“Yep,” Schlatt said, popping the ‘p’.

Sam raised his eyebrows. “What happened to his old one?”

“I’m afraid that’s Tommy’s business,” Schlatt said briskly, taking the communicator from Sam’s outstretched hand, “But that’s not what I really wanted to discuss with you anyway.”

Sam crossed his arms, staring at Schlatt with a searching expression. “Alright,” he said, “What do you want to talk about?”

Schlatt leaned forward, resting his arms against his desk. “Have you spoken to Dream recently?”

Sam frowned. “What does this have to do with anything?”

Schlatt laughed bitterly. “It kind of has to do with everything, Sam,” he said, “so, have you spoken to him recently?”

Sam’s mouth thinned. “He commissioned a few things,” he replied, “He paid fairly, so there’s nothing in there you can exactly fault him or me for.”

A feeling similar to dread stirred up in Schlatt's gut.

"What did he commission?" he pressed.

Sam sighed. "Listen, it was confidential."

"You know what's confidential?" Schlatt demanded, not getting up from his seat, "Cutting off people's limbs. So, has Dream been asking for a prosthetic of some kind recently? Because I can promise you that that is for Technoblade's now missing arm."

Sam's eyes widened. "What?" he asked, his voice slightly fainter than before, "When was this?"

Schlatt hummed, thinking about it. "Maybe five hours ago," he said, "At most. I don't know. Time is kind of a blur these days, I personally can't keep track."

Sam looked sick.

"Dream... did order a prosthetic," he admitted, "I haven't finished it yet."

"Anything else?" Schlatt pressed, "Because Dream seems to be going for world domination, so it would be really nice to know what we're going up against."

Sam frowned, drumming his fingers against his already crossed arms. "He did order something else," he admitted, "Though I can't imagine what they could be used for."

"Knowing Dream, probably something sick," Schlatt remarked, "Mind telling me what they are?"

Sam sighed, reaching back into his pocket and pulling out a small ball no larger than a shot glass.

"It's a bomb," Sam said upon seeing Schlatt's raised eyebrows, "It's a very small, yet very lethal bomb."

Schlatt swore. Dream *definitely* didn't have anything good planned with mini travel-sized explosives. Instantly, Schlatt began running his mind through all of the things Dream could do with a small bomb. Sneak it in with a package, maybe? Chuck it at someone?

"Why on earth would you make that for him?" Schlatt demanded, trying to get a read on this guy.

Sam shrugged. "He paid me," he said, "Listen, Manberg and Pogtopia, or whatever they're calling themselves now, you two are on the brink of a war. Explosives are kind of normal for a war."

"Small explosives like this?" Schlatt asked, "Normally in wars we pull out the TNT, not custom-made explosives that you can't create in bulk. You didn't even think to ask?"

"Did I ask you about Tommy's communicator?" Sam asked.

“Yeah, you asked me almost as soon as you pulled the thing out of your pocket.”

Sam snorted. “Okay, bad example. But Dream doesn’t like being asked questions,” Sam said, “Would you believe me if I told you I didn’t see much out of the ordinary?”

Schlatt gave Sam an unimpressed look. “I’d believe you if you said you’re a coward who’s too afraid to tell Dream ‘no’.”

“Maybe,” Sam admitted, “Or maybe I’m a coward who’s too afraid to ask questions. Dream paid me; there was no reason to say no.”

“Yeah, except for the fact that Dream’s using these as weapons to hurt children,” Schlatt said, raising his voice a little bit.

Honestly, Sam was such a stickler to the rules sometimes. If Dream was Schlatt’s commanding officer or president or something, that didn’t mean that Schlatt would submissively do whatever he wanted.

Then again, Sam was neutral; he probably didn’t understand the extent of the situation.

Sam looked slightly stumped at Schlatt’s reply, and if Schlatt had to guess, he was about to ask how or why or when Dream hurt children, and Schlatt would be forced to explain in the vaguest manner, and it would be pretty annoying.

“He—”

The door slammed open, and Tommy stormed into the office, looking ready to burn every single piece of furniture he set his sights on.

“Where’s Phil?” Tommy growled, pushing past Sam and slamming his hands down onto Schlatt’s desk. “Where’s Phil or I swear to god, I will—”

“Tommy,” Sam tried, but Tommy continued speaking, ignoring him.

“—kill you and nobody will ever find your remains because they will be too busy looking for *Phil* and Technoblade, so where the hell is he?”

Schlatt sighed. This was the last thing he wanted to do today. Today had already been long and hard enough, if Schlatt was being totally honest. Between Phil arriving and finding out about the time travel, Tommy stealing Schlatt’s phone to call his abusers, Schlatt receiving his phone back to see that Technoblade had sent them coordinates, Phil going out to scout said coordinates before disappearing completely, and now this, Schlatt felt he was pretty justified in his exhaustion.

“Kid, how did you even—”

“I’ll tell you how!” Tommy screamed, causing both Schlatt and Sam to jump, “A freaking dog told me! Instead of you, or Tubbo, or Quackity, or *Phil*, it was a dog that tipped me off that there was something wrong with Techno! A freaking *dog*!”

Schlatt winced. Clearly, Tommy had not taken being kept in the dark kindly. Schlatt wasn't sure if he could blame him.

"I'm sorry—"

"I don't want to hear it," Tommy snapped, "I want to know where my father is."

At that moment, Tubbo came running into the room, panting for breath. Tommy gave Tubbo a nasty look, causing Tubbo to shrink back a little bit, before returning his glare to Schlatt.

Schlatt frowned. "Listen, kid, I told Tubbo not to tell you, he didn't—"

"Does it look like I care?" Tommy demanded, "Because I don't. Tell me where Phil is."

Schlatt sighed. "We don't know," he said, wincing at the words.

There was a small moment of silence where Tommy just stared at Schlatt with nothing but what was likely pure shock.

"You *what?*"

"We lost him," Schlatt said again.

Another short silence.

"Give me your communicator," Tommy said coldly, holding out his hand, "Give it to me now."

Schlatt shook his head, instead picking up Tommy's new communicator off of his desk. "Actually, we finally got you your replacement," he said, "So now you don't have to borrow mine or anyone else's."

Tommy stared down at the new communicator in his hand with an expression close to awe. Then, he seemed to remember he was supposed to be angry, because his face hardened, and he stormed out of the room suddenly.

Tubbo watched him go, his face as pale as a sheet.

"The press are going to be a problem tomorrow," Tubbo muttered, looking a little bit like he's going to faint, "The press are going to be a big problem tomorrow."

"Tommy's going to be a big problem if he decides to stage a rescue," Schlatt said in response, massaging the bridge of his nose, "Someone needs to go after him."

"I'll do it," Sam volunteered.

Both Tubbo and Schlatt stared at him. Sam seemed entirely unperturbed.

"I'm the only one out of everyone in this room who he doesn't want to spit on," Sam pointed out, "Maybe I can get through to him."

“You don’t know what’s going on,” Tubbo told Sam bluntly, “So I’m not sure how exactly you’re supposed to help.”

Schlatt sighed. “You know what, though?” he decided, “Just try it. It’s better than Tommy running off and trying to save Technoblade and Phil himself.”

Sam nodded and left the room, leaving Schlatt and Tubbo alone.

“So,” Schlatt said calmly, “You want to tell me what happened, kid?”

Tubbo still looked too pale than was natural, and he stared at the corner of the wall, his hands carefully clasped behind his back. “Tommy figured out that Techno was in trouble and knew that I was lying about knowing where he was. Tommy got very mad and we had a bit of an argument in the middle of the street.”

“Sounds like it was a lot more than ‘a bit’ if you’re worried about the press.”

Tubbo shut his eyes and took a deep breath. “Tommy may have mentioned... your past actions... very loudly.”

Oh. *Oh.*

Honestly, Schlatt should’ve seen this coming.

“That’s alright, kid,” Schlatt said calmly, “It was bound to happen at some point. Besides, I kind of have this coming.”

Tubbo’s eyes snapped open. “But—”

“Tubbo,” Schlatt interrupted, his voice more a quiet type of serious that even Schlatt didn’t know he possessed, “I want you to look at me in the eyes and tell me that if Dream started acting like I am now, nice and all that crap, you wouldn’t want to put him in a prison cell for everything he’s done.”

Tubbo swallowed. “But you’re not Dream,” he said, his voice wavering slightly, “And you already died once, so—”

“And maybe dying was enough,” Schlatt agreed, “But in the eyes of the law, I have not paid the consequences for my actions, and I am more than happy to do that now.”

“They can’t arrest you, though,” Tubbo pointed out quietly, “You’re the president.”

Schlatt frowned, drumming his fingers against his desk. “You know, that is strange, isn’t it?” he asked out loud, “How come Wilbur didn’t instate any check and balances in his so-called democracy?”

Tubbo frowned. “I don’t know.”

Schlatt sighed, quickly writing down a note. “Well, we’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.” He glanced back up at Tubbo, who still looked abnormally uncomfortable.

Wait, did Tubbo think this was his fault? Is that why he was so upset?

“Tubbo, I don’t blame you for this,” Schlatt said seriously. Tubbo jolted to attention. “Like I said, before this was doomed to happen from the start.”

Tubbo glanced down at his feet. “I, um, that’s not what’s bothering me.”

Okay, well at least Tubbo knew this wasn’t his fault. Small steps. Now to figure out what was actually bothering Tubbo.

“Is it about your fight with Tommy?” Schlatt asked, “Did you say something you regret?”

Tubbo swallowed, glancing to the side. “I-I don’t know, probably.”

So, it wasn’t something Tubbo said, which only really left one thing. Schlatt didn’t blame Tommy for being upset, but Tommy could say some truly painful things when he wanted to, so Schlatt would understand if Tubbo was caught off guard.

“Was it something Tommy said?”

Tubbo winced, all but confirming Schlatt’s suspicions.

“It was-I had it coming-I...” Tubbo straightened his back more, his face becoming suddenly closed off. “It’s alright, I can handle it.”

Schlatt knew that look. That was the same expression and mannerisms that Tubbo began to wear when he got especially stressed during his presidency.

“Kid, you don’t have to hide how you’re feeling all the time,” Schlatt reminded Tubbo, “Remember that time you yelled at all of us for keeping you out of the loop? That was great.”

“That time was four hours ago,” Tubbo said, his mouth twitching. Schlatt watched as Tubbo took a shuddering breath. “I-I need to go.”

And with that, Tubbo dashed out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

Underneath Schlatt’s note about fixing the government, he added another concerning finding proper therapists and a dog for Tubbo. He should’ve gotten on that sooner.

Then he remembered that Tommy had only gotten his dog yesterday.

Schlatt put his head in his hands. So much was going on that he was losing all sense of time.

Oh well, these things happened.

When this chapter made you do research. Ew.

I know i have spoiled y'all rotten with those long wilbur interludes but that was an exception we are now returning to the around 3k word chapters. (this one was shorter sorry)

also tommy pov next chapter so that's always exciting.

I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading. <3

Technoblade Never Dies

Chapter Summary

Tommy makes a call.

Wilbur does a thing.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, child abuse, gaslighting, self loathing, possessive behaviors, referenced amputation, death, blood, abandonment issues,

SEE END NOTES FOR EXPLICIT TRIGGERWARNING RELATING TO THE CHAPTER TITLE

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy stumbled down the hall, his heart pounding against his chest.

He fumbled with his new communicator, feeling strange as he pressed the clean buttons. It was too shiny, too sleek, too clean, like it had never seen the things Tommy had seen, not like his old communicator had.

Tommy searched through the contacts that Sam was kind enough to put in the communicator ahead of time, and his heart did a strange flip when he saw Dream's name among them.

On one hand, calling Dream made Tommy want to puke. On the other hand, it was the one thing he had to do.

Tommy clicked the contact, still moving down the halls as quickly as possible. He had a feeling that Schlatt or Tubbo were going to chase after him, and Tommy would prefer to have this conversation uninterrupted.

Tommy brought the ringing phone up to his ear, his heart still thundering from a mixture of exertion and anger and *fear*.

"Dream speaking," Dream's voice said over the line, "Who do I owe this pleasure to?"

Tommy had made his way to his bedroom, and he slid inside, locking the door behind him.

"Where is Phil?" Tommy demanded, his voice coming out in short gasps, "Dream, where—"

“Oh, Tommy,” Dream whispered, his voice soft, “What makes you think I’m going to tell you?”

Tommy couldn’t breathe as he sunk to the floor, still leaning against the door. “I-I-*please*, Dream, I have to know—”

“Tommy.” Dream’s voice was sharper this time, and Tommy flinched, shutting his mouth. “Why should I tell you? You haven’t been a very good friend recently.”

Tommy opened and closed his mouth like a fish gasping for air, and he ran his hand back and forth in Clementine’s fur, trying to ground himself.

“I’m sorry,” Tommy whispered, resisting the urge to bury his face into Clementine. He didn’t want to do this; he didn’t want to act like he did during exile. But it was the only way that Dream would possibly let Tommy speak to Phil or Techno.

Dream hummed. “Thank you for apologizing,” he said, “Now, is there a particular reason for your call?”

Tommy would’ve thought it was obvious, but maybe Dream just wanted to hear him beg.

“I…” Tommy took a steadying breath, “I just want to know if Phil and Techno are okay.”

“Don’t lie to me,” Dream said, his voice calm if not for the threat hiding beneath it. Tommy flinched, and Clementine sat in Tommy’s lap. It was comforting.

“I-I would like to speak to them,” Tommy confessed, squeezing his eyes shut.

“Look me in the eyes, Tommy.”

Tommy snapped them open.

“After I already let you speak to Techno earlier today?” Dream asked quietly, “That sounds a little selfish of you if you ask me.”

Tommy’s vision was blurring. He knew he was selfish, he knew that, but it still hurt to hear. *It wasn’t true. He was just doing this to speak to Techno or Phil.*

“I know,” Tommy whispered, his hands shaking as he tried to pet Clementine, “I’m sorry.”

“You keep saying that,” Dream said, his voice harsher, “And yet you never change.”

“I—”

“Because of your selfishness earlier today, Technoblade tried to escape,” Dream continued, not letting Tommy get a single word in, “You know what happened because of your selfishness?”

Tommy looked over to the dog still matted with blood sitting next to him.

“What?” Tommy whispered.

“Wilbur cut his arm off.”

Cut his arm off, selfish, selfish, selfish.

Tommy couldn't breathe. The world was spinning; there was a strange knocking sound ringing in his head...

But wait, the knocking was coming from outside. Someone was... someone was knocking on Tommy's door. Tommy pressed his body weight against it with more strength, even though nobody had actually tried to open the door yet.

Sam's voice came from the other side of the door. “Tommy? Tommy, are you in there?”

Tommy ignored Sam, instead focusing on Dream's next words.

“Do you understand now?” Dream asked, his voice still sickly sweet, “Do you understand why I can't let you talk to either Phil or Technoblade?”

Tommy nodded, letting out a raspy, “Yeah.”

“Can I come in?” Sam asked, sounding concerned.

“And can you tell me why?” Dream's voice sounded like Wilbur used to when he asked Tommy to apologize.

“I... I would only get them hurt,” Tommy whispered, “My selfishness would only hurt them.”

“I'm sorry, Tommy,” Dream said, “But it has to be this way.”

Tommy nodded as Sam's voice emerged from behind the door again. “What are you talking about?”

“I'm sorry,” Tommy said to Dream, “I'll—I'll talk to you later.”

“I look forward to it.”

The call ended with a loud beep.

“Are you on the phone?” Sam asked, his voice laced with something that Tommy couldn't place, “Who are you talking to?”

Tommy didn't say anything, only resting his head against the door and staring up at the ceiling of the bedroom.

Self-loathing was boiling up inside Tommy. Phil and Techno were in danger, Tommy didn't even know how badly hurt they were because he couldn't speak to them, and Tommy was mutely sitting in his bedroom, refusing to do anything.

But... wouldn't his selfishness just make things worse?

"Tommy," Sam said softly, "I don't know what you're going through, but whoever was talking to you was wrong. You're not selfish."

Tommy let out a dull laugh. "You don't know me."

And it was true. Sam and Tommy hardly ever interacted. Sam couldn't possibly know how selfish Tommy was.

"I know you sacrificed your discs for L'manberg," Sam said, "And your lives, and that you would clearly do anything for your brothers."

Clementine barked, and Tommy's voice stuck in his throat.

"I—you wouldn't understand crap."

"Then explain it to me," Sam said, his voice still patient.

Tommy clenched his fists in Clementine's fur, hoping it didn't hurt her too much. He unclenched his fists a little bit just in case.

"I've-I've only made things worse," Tommy began, trying to hold back tears. Frustration built up inside him, and his next words were louder. Angrier. "All I can ever do is make every *damn thing* worse."

"Worse how?" Sam asked quietly.

"I-I don't know!" Tommy's voice built up in volume as he jumped to his feet, ignoring Clementine's startled bark. "I-I just *do!* Technoblade's hurt, and he wasn't *hurt* like this last time; he was never hurt like this last time, and I—"

"You didn't hurt him."

"I *did!*" Tommy screamed, pacing around his room and tugging at his hair, "Or I might as well have! And all I'm doing is sitting here; I'm not getting any crap done; I haven't been doing *anything!*"

"You don't have to do anything," Sam said, like it were that simple, "You're a kid."

"I'm not a kid," Tommy said bitterly through gritted teeth, "I haven't been a kid since these damn wars; you don't have to baby me; I'm not *weak*."

He was weak, he was, he was crying in this room like a baby.

"You're not weak." Sam sounded so sure from the other side of the door, and Tommy wondered how good of a liar Sam thought he was.

"I wish all of you would stop *lying*," Tommy snapped.

Tommy was sick of his own inaction; he was sick of how little he was doing. He was just sitting around like a damsel in distress. He hadn't been doing crap for anyone, and now Techno had lost an arm. He needed to do *something*.

"I'm not lying," Sam said, "I promise I'm not lying."

"Yeah, well I don't believe you."

Tommy looked through his inventory. He was still armed from his time in Pogtopia. It was honestly a miracle that Wilbur had never thought to ask Tommy to empty his entire inventory.

This was good, though. It meant that Tommy could just leave and find Techno now. The dog had clearly had a run in with him, and Tommy was pretty sure that the dog could successfully lead him to Techno's scent.

"I know you don't," Sam continued on calmly, clearly having no clue of what Tommy was up to, "But that doesn't mean it's not true."

Tommy scoffed at that, rolling his eyes as he looked around the room for some alternative exit with Sam blocking up the entrance to the bedroom. Tommy knew that Schlatt would not exactly endorse Tommy's rescue mission, so he had to leave in a less conventional way.

Tommy's eyes landed on his window.

"Tubbo is really worried about you," Sam continued, "And Schlatt, but I'm not sure how much you care about his opinion."

Tommy stiffened at the mention of Tubbo.

Tubbo...

Maybe Tommy had been a little harsh on Tubbo before. But Tubbo had betrayed him, Tubbo had lied to him. Tommy had just... Tommy had just wanted some honesty. Was it really so selfish to want that?

In all honesty, Tommy didn't know anymore.

"I'm sorry," Tommy said anyways, hoping that would placate Sam enough for him to pry open the window and begin climbing out with the Techno-tracking dog in tow.

"Don't be," Sam said, "I just wanted you to know that you're not alone, you know? People care about you."

Tommy got the window open, allowing a cold blast of air to enter the room.

"I know," Tommy lied.

Nobody cared about Tommy, except for maybe Wilbur.

And Wilbur's love had become something so twisted that Tommy wasn't even sure if it counted as love anymore.

"Okay," Sam said, "As long as you know that." There was a small pause. "Is the window open in there?"

Oh, that was Tommy's cue.

Tommy scooped up the Techno-tracker dog, patting Clementine on the head. Unfortunately, he could not climb while carrying two dogs, one dog was precarious enough.

If only Tommy had a water bucket, he'd be able to simply jump down.

And, holding the dog firmly with one arm, Tommy swung his legs outside the window and slowly began lowering himself down the side of the building.

He needed to save Techno and Phil; he owed them that much, at the very least.

Wilbur wasn't sure what had possessed him to visit Techno so quickly after seeing Phil had been captured. Wilbur had *just* been talking to Techno, and now he was back because Dream had delivered a crushing blow against Schlatt's forces?

"He's safe," Phil had said, reassuring Wilbur even though he was his enemy.

But Tommy wasn't safe. Phil was lying to him. He was lying to him like he always had, because that's what Phil was. A liar. Phil didn't care about him.

"I love you. I love you so much."

Nothing made sense anymore.

So maybe that's why Wilbur came into Technoblade's cell, ready to blow off some steam in one way or another, maybe demand some answers from Technoblade.

When Wilbur entered the room, however, he found Technoblade staring at the space his arm used to be. It was still strange to see him this way, without his braid and arm.

It felt wrong, if Wilbur was being perfectly honest with himself.

Wilbur shook the thought away; he didn't give a crap about Technoblade anyway.

"You know, Wilbur, I've been thinking," Technoblade said, not even looking up, "Do you know how respawn works?"

Wilbur froze, the iron door shutting loudly behind him like a funeral drum.

What was Technoblade implying?

“Of course, I know how respawn works,” Wilbur said, his voice shaking slightly. He steadied himself, and this time his voice came out more venomous. “What are you implying?”

Technoblade hummed, glancing up at the ceiling as though they were having a perfectly ordinary conversation.

“What about regeneration?” Technoblade asked, “Because while I’ve certainly seen amputation wounds before, I don’t know if I’ve seen what happens to someone who dies and respawns while missing a limb.”

Oh god, Technoblade had officially lost it.

“You want to kill yourself?” Wilbur demanded, clenching his fists angrily, “Are you mad?”

Technoblade snorted. “Funny question, coming from you.”

Wilbur growled. “You can’t just, you can’t just, you—”

Technoblade rolled his eyes. “Wilbur, I heard Phil get taken in,” he said, his voice suddenly heavy, “You don’t actually need me anymore. Phil will serve the role of hostage just fine.”

Why was Techno taking about this? Technoblade was never one to admit defeat, to *kill himself* for a single limb.

Then again, Technoblade had never lost a limb like this before, had he? And Technoblade relied on his arms for fighting.

But that didn’t matter, Technoblade was still dangerous, and Wilbur couldn’t just allow himself to grow back his arm and rejoin Schlatt. Come to think of it, had they even set Technoblade’s spawn here?

“You think that’s what this is about?” Wilbur snarled, “You’re important, you could join Schlatt, you could fight against me, you could hurt Tommy—”

“I’m not going to hurt Tommy, Wilbur!” Technoblade shouted all of a sudden, baring his teeth like a beast.

However, as soon as Techno’s raging anger came, it left, simmering down to a boiling anger. “He’s my little brother too.”

“He’s not *yours*,” Wilbur snapped, “Where have you been while he was sacrificing his *life* —”

“Are we really going to do this again?” Techno interrupted, raising his eyebrows.

“*Tommy doesn’t belong to you, Wilbur.*”

Wilbur gritted his teeth. “Fine,” he snarled, “But if you think for a minute I’m going to let you *die*—”

“Think about it, Wilbur,” Technoblade interrupted, smiling slightly, “You hate me. And that’s pretty understandable, considering you’re under the impression that Tommy is being locked up and I am this cosmic evil—”

Wilbur wished that everyone would stop acting like he wasn't making any sense. He was not crazy. Tommy was in danger; Tommy was being hurt; Technoblade was just lying to him.

“He’s safe.”

“I’m not under the impression,” Wilbur interrupted, “Tommy *is* being—”

“Wilbur, for once in your life, I want you to shut up and listen to me,” Technoblade said, scowling.

Wilbur, for some odd reason, shut his mouth.

“You hate me, Wilbur,” Technoblade continued calmly, “So why not just kill me? You’ve been wanting to do it this whole time anyway.”

Wilbur paced around the room, clutching his hair in his hands. “Because it’s not *wise*,” Wilbur stressed, “It would be foolish, you would just spawn back in Pogtopia, you’d get away to Manberg, Tommy—”

“You know what I’m going to do when I see Tommy, Wilbur?” Technoblade’s voice didn’t hold any threat, but that meant nothing. “I’m going to give him the biggest hug imaginable. Hopefully with both arms. And I am going to promise that Dream will never touch him again —”

“What about Dream?” Wilbur snapped his attention to Techno’s eyes, which were gazing at Wilbur unflinchingly. “What did Dream do?”

“The only thing Dream wants is me!”

“Do you want the whole story, or just the gist?” Techno asked dryly.

Wilbur stalked toward Techno, towering over him. “The whole damn thing.”

Technoblade shrugged. “Well, allow me to set the scene.” He frowned for a moment before continuing. “Tommy has been exiled alone on this beach called Logstedshire, apparently. And at Logstedshire, Dream would visit every damn day.”

Wilbur had no idea what the point of this story was. Tommy had never been exiled apart from the one in Pogtopia. There was no such place as Logstedshire.

“Why are you telling me this?” Wilbur asked, crossing his arms, “You said you’d tell me what Dream had supposedly done to Tommy.”

Technoblade glared. “I’m getting to that, okay?”

“Well hurry the hell up,” Wilbur snarled, “I can make things hurt without actually killing you.”

Technoblade sighed. “Dream hurt and emotionally manipulated Tommy to the point that Tommy became suicidal. Happy?”

Suicidal.

Wilbur stumbled backward, the breath knocked out of him as if he had been shot.

That... that couldn't be right. Wilbur had stood by Tommy's side his entire life. Tommy had never... Dream had never... Dream only wanted to help him. Tommy was *fine*.

“If-if I were to jump off of this roof right now, would you kill yourself?”

“You're lying.” Wilbur's voice was shaking, but from fear or from rage, he would never know. “Stop *lying* to me!”

“I'm not lying!” Technoblade shouted, his eyes flashing again, “And you know what, Wil? You haven't been any better!”

“I've been protecting Tommy,” Wilbur snarled, “You don't get to tell me—”

“*No*, Wilbur,” Technoblade said, “You know what you've been doing? You've been abusing him. I've told you this time and time again, but you never seem to listen—”

Wilbur's heart was beating too fast, the world seemed to be spinning all around him, he wanted Technoblade to *stop*.

It wasn't abuse; it wasn't. it had to be done; it was necessary...

“Shut up!” Wilbur screamed, “I haven't—”

“If *I* were to break Tommy's wrist and hurt him whenever he so much as stepped in the wrong direction, what would you do to me?”

Wilbur surged forward, grabbing Technoblade by his shirt. “Don't you dare touch him,” he snarled.

Technoblade smiled triumphantly. “So it's fine when you do it, but if anyone else does it—”

“I care about him,” Wilbur spat.

“And so do I!” Technoblade exclaimed, “But the difference between you and I, Wilbur, is that I don't *abuse* him because of it.”

No. It wasn't true. Wilbur didn't abuse Tommy. He had to do it. He had to. It was the only way to get Tommy to stay. Wilbur didn't want to do it, but it was necessary.

And Technoblade didn't care about Tommy. Technoblade only cared about Phil; he made that abundantly clear as the years had gone by.

"Stop lying," Wilbur growled.

"You know what, Wilbur?" Techno asked, raising his eyebrows, "Until you own up to what you've done, I'm going to make it my personal mission to keep Tommy as far away from you as possible. You won't ever see him again."

No. No, Technoblade couldn't do that. Wilbur couldn't let Techno do that.

And before Wilbur even quite comprehended what he was doing, he was holding a knife to Technoblade's throat.

Technoblade smiled, and Wilbur realized what he had done.

"Don't," Wilbur only managed to say before pushing himself off of Technoblade, removing the knife from his throat.

"Oh yeah?" Technoblade challenged, "I'll tell him the truth. I'll tell him that you're dangerous, that you only hurt him, that he can't—"

Wilbur let out a guttural scream, spinning around and throwing the knife at Technoblade.

It landed in his chest.

Wilbur stared.

Technoblade stared back before glancing down at the knife in his chest, likely inches away from Technoblade's heart.

"Damnit, Wil," Technoblade muttered, coughing and causing blood to splatter onto the floor, "You missed."

Technoblade collapsed forward, and Wilbur rushed toward him. Collapsing to his knees, Wilbur rolled Technoblade onto his back. His now short pink hair was dirty with grime and blood. Wilbur wondered why he was only just now noticing.

"Your hair is pink."

And for some reason, Wilbur gathered Technoblade into his arms, cradling him in a way that Wilbur never thought he'd ever hold for Techno before.

"Huh," Technoblade coughed, blood dribbling out of his mouth, "So much for Technoblade never dies, huh?"

Tears were building up in Wilbur's eyes for some damn reason.

"Shut up," Wilbur whispered, his voice choked.

“For the record,” Technoblade continued, staring up at the ceiling, his eyes unfocused looking, “I do care about you, Wilbur. And I know—” He coughed more. “—I know you think you’re doing what’s best.”

Wilbur didn’t want to be understood by Technoblade. He hated Technoblade.

Wilbur didn’t want Techno to die.

“You wanna spar?”

Techno smiled.

“Let’s play chess.”

Wilbur held his breath.

“I bet she’s going to name him something stupid like Henry.”

Techno closed his eyes.

“Theseus is a fine name!”

Wilbur’s hold on him tightened.

“Wil, she wants to speak to you.”

A single tear rolled down Techno’s cheek. Wilbur was suddenly aware that his own cheeks were wet with tears.

“I love you, Wilbur,” Techno gasped between breaths, “Thanks.”

Techno went limp.

Wilbur screamed.

Chapter End Notes

Trigger warning/Edit July 2, 2022: Technoblade dies in this chapter. He respawns, but in light of the real Technoblade's passing, if you're not comfortable continuing, I completely understand.

My sister is sitting in the other side of the room booing me because i'm not posting this fast enough and she wants to read it.

Thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

It's Free Trauma

Chapter Summary

Techno is definitely fine.

Tommy is definitely not fine.

But at least Chat's back.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, panic attacks, referenced death, missing limb, phantom limb pain, child abuse, manipulation, emotional abuse, gaslighting, sorta non-consensual drug use, self-inflicted ableism

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

QUICKLY WHO KNOWS THEIR BEST FUNERAL MARCH? DEARLY BELOVED, WE GATHER HERE TODAY-WRONG EVENT GENIUS. I REFUSE TO BELIEVE THIS IS REAL. TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES IS A LIE. JUST LIKE THE CAKE. F. F. F,F,F,F,,F,F,F,F,F,F,,F,F,F,F,F,F,F,F,F,F,F,F,,F

Technoblade moaned, neither opening his eyes nor moving from his comfortable position. The softness of the bed cushions and the blanket covering his body was not unwelcome, especially after that rather painful process of respawn, not to mention the actual death itself.

The image of Wilbur's face was still burned in his mind, the cacophony of emotions that Techno couldn't even begin to translate. As a matter of fact, if it weren't for the tears streaming down Wilbur's face, Techno might've assumed that Wilbur was horrified at Techno escaping.

As it turned out, however, Wilbur did still hold something he and Techno once had in his heart, because Wilbur had actually held Techno as he died.

It was a strange but not at all unwelcome development.

Technosoft? TECHNODEAD. TECHNO DEADER THAN A DOORNAIL. TECHNOGHOST? THE WORLD HAS ENDED. OUR ENTIRE LIFE IS A LIE. YOU HAD ONE JOB TECHNOBLADE, ONE JOB.

As per usual, Techno ignored the Chat, instead deciding to assess his situation without actually opening his eyes. Technoblade was tired, okay? This was the first time he had died and it took a lot out of him.

It really made on think, though. Tommy and Wilbur had done this twice already?

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE ONE OF THE PEASANTS? YOU HAVE SHAMED THE ENTIRE FAMILY HONOR. SHAME ON YOU, SHAME ON YOUR FAMILY, SHAME ON YOUR COW- DO WE NEED TO SEND YOU ON A QUEST TO FIND YOUR HONOR?

Clearly, he had not respawned at wherever Dream and Wilbur were hiding at, or Technoblade would've been in ropes again by now.

On the negative side of things, Technoblade's right arm still hurt. This meant one of two things. Either his arm had returned, and it hurt from such a grueling process, *or* his arm was still gone, and the phantom limb pain was persisting.

Techno really *wasn't* in the mood to open his eyes and find out, if he was being completely honest.

OPEN YOUR EYES YOU MORTAL COWARD. ASK NO QUESTIONS AND WE WILL TELL YOU NO LIES. I DREAMED A DREAM OF STILL HAVING OUR BRAID. TECHNOBRAID, YOU SHALL BE SORELY MISSED.

Okay, so apparently the braid was still gone. Great... just great.

Now that Techno was aware of it again, his back felt strangely naked without the familiar weight of his braid. His hybrid instincts itched for him to reach up and start braiding the little hair he had left, but even as he moved his arms up to even just feel how short his hair even was now, Techno became aware of the fact that only his left arm was moving.

No.

Techno snapped his eyes open and shot upward out of his bed, only using his left hand to prop himself up, because his right arm wasn't *moving, and it was supposed to come back, that was part of the trade off, the arm was supposed to come back—*

Techno looked to his right side, trying desperately to see his arm hanging limply at his side.

Bile rose up in his throat when his eyes landed on the sleeve of his fresh shirt (because apparently clothing was restored on respawn) hanging limply, looking deflated without Technoblade's arm to fill in the space.

It hadn't regenerated. Technoblade was officially missing an arm.

Oof. Technoarm we liked you. BUT WE LIKED TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES BETTER. ALSO TECHNOBRAID. HOW DID I LIVE, IN A KINGDOM OF BRAID THEIVESSSSSSSS?

"Do you ever *shut up*?" Techno snarled, glaring up at the stone ceiling.

There was a momentary silence.

*Nope. **No.** sorry? **NOT SORRY YOU MORTAL FOOL. LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, YOU'RE LIKE SHIRO. DO NOT MENTION THAT SHOW TO ME. SHIRO THE HERO-YOU'RE LIKE JAMES BUCKY BARNES. TECHNOBLADE IS THE WINTER SOLDIER CONFIRMED??***

“I am not actually kidding this time,” Technoblade growled, throwing the covers off of himself with his left hand, “You idiots make a mockery of every single situation I am in, and while I have to admit, sometimes it’s pretty funny, I have just lost a limb. Please treat the scenario with due respect.”

Technoblade let out an annoyed huff when blissful silence rang in his head, and he got out of the bed, stumbling slightly when he stood up to his full height. Clearly, respawning made the body slightly unbalanced.

*Sorry. **Technobalance.** Please jokes are the only way we cope.*

Technoblade rolled his eyes as he went to the chest in the room, which he recognized as his bedroom in Pogtopia.

Wilbur and Dream would probably know to look for him here. Techno had better grab what he could find and then *move*.

*Wait, so can we talk to you again? **We won't make fun of your arm.***

Techno sighed, feeling slightly bad for his outburst. “Yes, you can talk to me.”

*AHAHAHA, FINALLY I CAN SPEAK. **FREEDOM. CAUSE I'M FREEEEEEEEEEEE, FREE FALLING. THANK YOU TECHNOCHAN, YOU ARE MERCIFUL.***

Technoblade would never admit that he did somewhat enjoy his Chat’s antics. Even those few moments of silence had felt somewhat lonely.

He opened the chest and bent over, awkwardly rifling through the items with one hand. Unfortunately, none of Techno’s truly valuable stuff was in here. Techno had been saving those in his secret vault, only allowing simple tools and items to be in Pogtopia.

Technoblade stared woefully at the diamond sword he had pulled out from his chest. He missed netherite.

*HAHA, TECHNOPOOR. **THIS IS WHAT COMES OF DEATH. JUST GO TO YOUR VAULT GENIUS. THE VAULT. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE TIME AGAIN POG? IT'S HIS VAULT. NO, NO, I WANT TO SEE HIM BREAK INTO HIS OWN VAULT.***

Techno ignored them, instead placing the sword into his inventory and gathering up a few potions that he had left in his chest. Then, he clumsily put on spare suit of netherite armor, noting that he hadn’t managed to get any half-way decent enchantments on it.

Oh well, Techno would probably lose any fight he got into anyway.

Wait a minute, what was he thinking?

*SELF DOUBT, IN MY TECHNOBLADE? IT'S MORE LIKELY THAN YOU THINK. **CRAP ANY THERAPISTS HERE? I CAN BE ONE! YOU ARE NOT A THERAPIST. TECHNOBLADE, DON'T SCREW UP. TECHNOFAIL. NOTHING HAPPENED???***

“Yeah, I don’t know what I was thinking,” Techno muttered, closing the chest and pulling himself back up to his feet, “I’ve beaten plenty of enemies one handed.”

*THAT'S THE SPIRIT. **SPIRIT? LIKE THE HORSE. HORSE. CARL. WHERE IS CARL OUR BELOVED? CARL OUR BELOVED WE'RE COMING FOR YOU.***

The Chat did have a point. Techno had spent a woefully long time away from Carl, and even he admitted that he would appreciate some quality time with his horse.

Techno was ninety-percent sure he had left Carl in the stable outside of Pogtopia that day that Chat had decided to go back in time from the future.

*I CAN VOUCH. **THAT WAS A CRAZY DAY. YEAH, ONE MINUTE, WE WERE FOLLOWING TOMMY AROUND, STOPPING HIM FROM BEING STUPID, AND THE NEXT-BAM IN A FOREST. BAM IN THE PAST. BAM WILBUR LIVES. BAM I MISS GHOSTBUR.***

Techno snorted at that, even though he had never met Ghostbur in his life. Frankly, Techno had a feeling he would hate Ghostbur for what he represented, but he supposed he would never know.

He made his way back up to the entrance of Pogtopia, trying not to be too perturbed by the dark emptiness that the once at least somewhat inhabited ravine now held.

As he exited the ravine, he noted dully that it was night.

Normally, this would never bother him. Now...

*STOP SELF DOUBT. **TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES. NO THAT'S A LIE REMEMBER. TECHNOBLADE NEVER DIES WHEN HE DOESN'T WANT TO. YES.***

Techno took a deep breath. Chat was right. He was being irrational. He could handle a few monsters just fine, even with only his left arm. He had trained for this.

And yet, Techno barely took five steps outside of Pogtopia before at least five crossbows were aimed at his chest.

Techno tensed, immediately raising his arms (arm) in surrender, at least for the time being. This was by no means *actual* surrender, but as a general rule of etiquette, it was always good to find out *why* someone was aiming a crossbow at you before killing them.

*THAT'S A TERRIBLE RULE. **BLOOD. SHOT IN THE HEART, AND YOU'RE TO BLAME, YOU FOLLOW RULES OF ETIQUETTE. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD***

Techno instead peered at the person in front of him, surprised to see that he actually didn't recognize their face. Well, maybe that wasn't *so much* of a surprise. Techno used to have plenty on unrecognizable enemies. But recently, Techno seemed to know all of his enemies pretty well.

"Technoblade?" said one of his attackers, "Is that you?"

Techno sighed. "Yes, it is I, Technoblade. You need not fear for your children; I am not in the mood to kill anyone today."

Surprisingly enough, all but one of his attackers lowered their crossbows.

PERSUASION WINS AGAIN. AWWW, I WANTED BLOOD. YOU STAY AWAY FROM OUR TECHNOBLADE. DON'T WORRY TECHNOBLADE, CHAT WILL PROTECT YOU.

"We've been searching for you," said the same attacker from before, "Under orders of President Schlatt. He wants you safely recovered and escorted back to the capital."

HELL NO. NOPE, NOPE, NOT TODAY. NO GOVERNMENTS WILL TELL US WHAT TO DO. SCHLATT CAN DIE. SCHLATT IS PROTECTING TOMMY. SCHLATT CAN DIE AFTER WE SAVE TOMMY.

Techno gritted his teeth. "Tell him I appreciate it, but I can take care of myself."

Even though it was dark, Techno could see all of them look in the direction of his arm. He did not appreciate it.

"Sir, we have—"

"Tell your president that I refused to come with you," Techno said, trying and failing to keep his voice pleasant, "Because I just want to visit my horse right now, and then I want to see my little brother, but on my terms, *understand?*"

His last word was less a request and more of a threat, and all of them had the common sense to nod and back off. Good. Techno would have really hated to have killed those people, even if they were working for a corrupt system.

WOW, YOU'RE TAKING NO PRISONERS TODAY. TECH-NO-PRISONERS. TECH-ONLY-DEATH. GIVE ME LIBERTY, OR I WILL GIVE YOU DEATH. WHY DON'T YOU WANT TO VISIT TOMMY? I WANT TO SEE RACCOON BOY. RACCOONINNIT, RACCOONINNIT...

Techno grimaced as he stalked away from Schlatt's people. In all honesty, he wasn't entirely sure why he wasn't rushing straight to Tommy. Hell, he had practically promised Wilbur that was exactly what he was going to do.

He just... he needed more time. In case you hadn't noticed, Techno was currently a bit of a mess, and he just needed a few minutes of getting Carl to pull himself together. The last thing he needed was for Tommy to see him showing weakness or anything like that.

GOD FORBID WE SHOW WEAKNESS. AIN'T NO WEAKNESS IN THIS HOUSEHOLD. CARL. TOMMY. CARL. TOMMY. GUYS, WHAT ABOUT BOTH? TOMMYCARL CUDDLE? THE UNSTOPPABLE DUO. TECHNOBLADE COWERS BEFORE THEM.

As Chat predicted earlier, it was not hard for Technoblade to cut through the monsters in his path on his way to the stables, even with only one arm. Technoblade would have been astonished at his swift learning skills if, of course, he hadn't trained for this exact scenario.

Well, actually, when he trained for it, he was mostly planning for if his arm was *injured*, not completely gone, but Techno's missing arm still hurt, so it was close enough.

Finally, Techno reached the stables, and sure enough, there Carl stood in his majestic glory, patiently waiting for his owner to return.

CARL. CARL OUR BELOVED. CARL YOU LOOK AS BEAUTIFUL AS THE DAY WE FIRST MET. PLEASE CARL I NEED TO FEED YOU ALL THE SUGAR CUBES. TECHNOBLADE'S MAJESTIC STEED IS HERE AT LAST.

A strange type of relief swelling in Techno's chest, Techno approached Carl, who perked up and looked in his direction. And then next thing he knew, Carl was trotting over to him, stopping only to nuzzle Techno's face.

TOGETHER AT LAST. CARL PLEASE YOU'RE MAKING ME CRY.

Techno grinned in spite of himself, raising his arm to stroke his horse. Carl let out a satisfied huff, beginning to sniff in Techno's pockets for any food.

"Sorry, Carl, I don't have any—"

As though something had cut off Techno's airways, Techno stopped speaking, feeling as though if he tried to continue, his chest might burst.

Carl returned to his full height, gently nudging Techno with what Techno knew to be concern. Techno only rested his forehead against Carl's neck, trying to take a deep breath and failing. It sounded more like a dying fish.

What was happening to him? He was *fine* five seconds ago, and one thought of having no food for his horse in his inventory was causing him to react like he was dying? It's not like it was the end of the world that he had lost a few carrots that were in his inventory when Wilbur, you know—

His ears were ringing. He couldn't hear Chat. Why couldn't he hear Chat?

Why on earth was he panicking—no, not panicking, feeling merely concerned—over the fact he couldn't hear Chat?

Everything was too loud and too quiet all at once, and Techno sunk to the ground upon feeling himself get lightheaded. He hadn't felt this way in *years*, not since maybe a few years after Kristin died. Why was his body choosing to be an inconvenience now of all times?

No. Techno was fine. There was nothing wrong.

Techno gritted his teeth with newfound determination and sucked in a breath. It felt like knives against his lungs, but it was better than not breathing at all.

Even though Techno's ears were still ringing, he forced himself to wrap his arms—arm, it was one arm now—around Carl's neck, pulling himself back to his feet. He was fine; he didn't need to sit on the floor. His legs were perfectly functional, thank you very much; they were no longer tied up like before.

His vision became slightly black around the edges, but Technoblade only leaned against Carl, breathing in a rather awkward fashion until his ears stopped ringing.

OMG HE'S DYING. HE'S FINE. TECHNOLAME. NO RESPECT, THE MAN JUST HAD A PANIC ATTACK. HE'S FINE GUYS. EVERYBODY, CALL THE AMBULANCE. WHEEOOO WHEEEOOO WHEOOO. HE'S DEAD, IT'S OVER, TECHNOBLADE...

"If you give me a migraine, I will end you," Techno said through gritted teeth, gripping onto Carl's coarse hair abnormally tightly. He took a deep and still slightly unsteady breath, forcing himself to loosen his hold. It would not do to lose his head.

Sorry not sorry for what I said. DON'T WORRY DON'T WORRY DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD. Guys, no singing. YES SINGING. DO YOU HEAR THE PEOPLE SING, SINGING A SONG OF ANGRY MEN. NO MUSICA.

Techno briefly shut his eyes, praying for patience, before opening them again and patting Carl's neck lightly.

"Thanks for the support," he said, "But I can handle myself."

Carl let out a huff that implied he was rolling his eyes at Techno, which Techno found pretty ridiculous.

"Don't give me that look," he said, pushing himself off of Carl and heaving himself onto the saddle with slight difficulty.

THE DENIAL IS STRONG WITH THIS ONE. THEY SAY INSANITY IS IGNORING YOUR TRAUMA. SEE NO TRAUMA, FEEL NO TRAUMA. TECHNOPANIK. THERAPY CARL?

"I don't... I'm fine," Techno said, feeling too tired from whatever just happened to properly comprehend Chat.

He tugged at Carl's reigns, marveling at how odd it was to only be doing this with one hand. Sure, sometimes he'd let go before to use a weapon on horseback, but still...

Techno? Trauma. Therapy? Carl. Repressing all your emotions? Techno again. Hotel? Trivago.

“We’re going to Tommy now,” Techno said, hoping to distract Chat from their insistence upon Techno having post traumatic stress. The idea was frankly ridiculous.

FINALLY. BEAUTIFUL BOY WE ARE COMING. YOU’D BETTER HUG US. TECHNO NEEDS A HUG. HUGNOBLADE. HUGBLADE. TECHNOHUG.

Techno tried not to think about promising Wilbur that he’d hug Tommy as soon as he saw him again. That was back when he had the slimmest hope he’d get out of that scenario with both of his arms intact.

Now that Techno was thinking about it, it had been a pretty naïve train of thinking. Scars didn’t exactly go away after people respawned.

Wilbur’s horrified face flashed across Techno’s vision again, and Techno decided to push this line of thinking away as well.

Damnit, Phil was still there. Techno had just left Phil behind, and—

STOP. PHIL WILL BE FINE. WILL HE THO? NOT HELPFUL. PHIL IS A BIG MAN, GO GIVE TOMMY HUG. TOMMY HUG POG.

The Chat was right. Techno would go enlist help from Schlatt, as much as he loathed the idea of working with a tyrant, and together they’d figure out how to break Phil out of that prison. Everything was going to be fantastic as long as Techno kept a cool head.

He could do that.

Techno led Carl up to the entrance of the White House, grateful that it was night, so at least he wasn’t being stared at by a billion different people. Sure, some people were still up and about, but it was better than broad daylight, where he would have certainly been noticed.

As soon as he reached the entrance, he leapt off of Carl, approaching the guards.

“Don’t worry, I have my permit,” he said as soon as he was stopped, “I’m Technoblade.”

He was instantly let in.

I CAN’T BELIEVE THAT WORKED. DAMN I THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO PULL A SWORD OR SOMETHING. I CAN’T WAIT TO GET A SHINY PROSTHETIC TO SHOW OFF TO THE GUARDS. DON’T WORRY I CAN DO WHAT I WANT.

Techno dashed into the White House, ready to find Tommy and make sure that he was *really* okay, not just the comforts he had told himself while trapped in that dark room.

He was half-way up the stairs when he slammed straight into a random stranger. Techno stumbled backward, forcing his legs to stay steady and trying to splay out both arms for balance and only successfully using one.

“Technoblade?”

Techno looked up, surprised to see that he actually knew this person.

“I know you,” he said, staring at the creeper hybrid with suspicion.

SAM. SAMWISE GAMGEE. SAM-I-AM. NO I DO NOT WANT GREEN EGGS AND HAM. I DO NOT WANT THEM SAM-I-AM.

Oh, now Techno knew where he knew this guy from. This was the same dude who was neutral in the war, but seemed to like Tommy well enough.

Cool.

Sam was still staring at him like he was supposed to be dead. Techno found that quite insulting, considering that he was only presumed captured at the time.

“Listen, I’d love to continue this *riveting* conversation,” Techno said dryly, “But, um, could you kindly point me in the direction of Tommy?”

Sam blinked. “About that...” he said slowly.

ABOUT WHAT? SAMWISE YOU’D BETTER GIVE ME SOME ANSWERS OR THERE WILL BE BLOOD TO PAY.

“What?” Techno snapped.

“Tommy’s... gone.”

Tommy hurriedly followed the dog, hidden not only by the cover of night, but also by one of the invisibility potions he managed to nick from a shop on his way out of Manberg.

He just didn’t want any of Schallt’s scouts to stop him. That wasn’t so wrong, was it?

Unfortunately, this was his last potion, and it seemed to be running out of time. He’d better hope that the dog got close to his destination soon, or Tommy was going to start having issues on multiple levels.

Fortunately, the dog stopped on an unassuming patch of grass right as Tommy’s potion ran out. The dog walked around the patch a couple of times, and Tommy quickly dug down on that spot.

His heart thumped against his chest frantically as he unearthed a hidden stairway underground. The dog had found it; he was actually here. Now all he had to do was rescue Phil and Techno, and everything would be fine.

Tommy heard a rustling in the bushes behind him, and he quickly ducked into the stairs, leaving the Techno-sniffing dog behind as he quickly resealed the hole behind him.

He’d come back for the dog. Tommy was sure that he would be fine.

However, Tommy was much less confident concerning the wellbeing of Techno and Phil.

Tommy quickly tiptoed down the stone steps, hoping that it wouldn't be too difficult to find wherever Phil and Techno were being held.

Knowing him, it would probably be the incredibly difficult.

Useless.

Tommy shook himself mentally. He was trying to be useful. He was saving Phil and Techno. That had to be at least a little useful.

Tommy quietly reached the bottom of the stairs, noting the long hallway seemed to extend for miles.

Wow, Wilbur had decided to be thorough with this, hadn't he?

Thinking about Wilbur made Tommy's heart stutter, which was stupid, because he *cared* about Wilbur, even if he was a little off of his rocker. Tommy was being selfish, being so afraid—

"Hello, Tommy."

Tommy froze, his heart stopping completely when he felt a hand grasp his shoulder. He flicked his eyes over to the touch and thought he might faint when he saw familiar fingerless gloves.

Dream's fingers squeezed Tommy's shoulder painfully, and Tommy remembered that he was supposed to reply.

"Hello, Dream," he said, even though his voice was barely audible to his own ears.

Dream let go of Tommy's shoulder, and Tommy sagged slightly. His hands were shaking. He wanted to reach for a weapon of some kind, but did he even dare?

Dream walked around Tommy so that he was right in front of him, practically towering over Tommy, even though they weren't that different in height.

"I was wondering when you'd finally visit me," Dream whispered softly, bringing his hand up to caress Tommy's cheek.

Tommy, to his complete horror, leaned into the touch.

Remember why you're here, Tommy.

Tommy clenched his fists, trying to swallow back the lump in his throat. "I-I didn't come for you."

Dream's lips tilted downward, and Tommy's heart felt like it was about to burst out of his chest.

“Oh, Tommy,” Dream said, his voice still soft, “You don’t mean that.”

Dream brought his hand up to ruffle Tommy’s hair, and it simultaneously felt so *good* and so *terrifying* that the damn broke. Hot tears began streaming down his face, and Tommy choked back sobs.

He couldn’t be here. But Dream was his friend. *He needed to leave, he needed to run, he needed to go.*

“I-I—”

Dream shushed him, gently wiping the tears from Tommy’s cheeks. “It’s alright. You’re home now.”

Tommy could feel himself slipping. *He couldn’t slip, Dream wasn’t his friend, Dream wasn’t his friend—*

“I-I don’t-I’m not—”

Dream’s voice was harder when he next spoke. “You’re confused. I’m your friend, remember?”

Tommy’s mind was doing loop-de-loops. He couldn’t focus. Dream was his friend, right? But no, that wasn’t right, Dream wasn’t his friend. He was just manipulating him, yeah.

“You-you aren’t,” Tommy’s voice was shaking so much he was shocked anyone could understand him.

Dream hummed, digging a small hole into the stone ground.

“Everything in the hole, Tommy.”

It was as if another being took control of Tommy’s body as he immediately began scrambling to find armor on his person. Upon realizing he had none, he shrunk away from Dream.

“I don’t—”

“*Everything.*”

And Tommy was back at Logstedshire, except everything was blown up, and he could barely think past the ash in his lungs. He scrambled to throw everything he could find in his inventory into the hole, barring his communicator.

Dream tilted his head at him. “The communicator too.”

Tommy’s mouth was dry. “But-but—”

Dream moved to pull his sword out of his inventory, and Tommy’s no-longer existing scars burned.

“Okay, okay!” he squeaked, throwing the brand-new communicator into the hole.

Dream nodded, carding Tommy’s hair with his fingers gently. Tommy felt strangely like a cat as he once again leaned into the touch, staring dully at the pile of stuff in the hole.

He wasn’t quite sure where he was anymore. Logstedshire? Underground? Did it even matter anymore?

Dream placed down a piece of TNT and lit it up. Tommy flinched as the all of his items exploded, real smoke filling his lungs.

“I’m sorry,” Tommy whispered, “I-I didn’t-I—”

Tommy was so confused.

“That’s alright, Tommy,” Dream said, “I just need you to drink this for me, okay?”

Tommy barely struggled as Dream brought a potion to his lips, forcing the burning liquid to his throat.

Tommy’s eyes grew heavy, and darkness closed in.

Chapter End Notes

Notes, excellent, i love myself some notes.

First of all, twitter user @lghostberg, i just want you to know i really appreciate your keyboard smash tweets, and that you're awesome but i don't have twitter so i can't interact with you on that platform.

Continuing, I had that final scene in my mind from pretty much the very beginning, so it's mostly coincidence that one of the inspired-by works was similar to it.

Technoblade be repressing those emotions.

Edit: also, any ableist thoughts or feelings are purely misconceptions by the characters

And um, thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

First Present-Day Healthy Hug!

Chapter Summary

Wilbur is sus.

Techno wants his brother back.

Tubbo is stressed.

Chapter Notes

tw: paranoia, ptsd, manipulation, gaslighting, implied/referenced child abuse, referenced child soldiers, referenced child leadership,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur didn't move until Techno's body disappeared, leaving a pile of the stuff that was in his inventory. There wasn't much, probably since Dream had confiscated any weapons and potions and such. A few stray potatoes littered the ground, though, and a small golden locket lay on the floor.

Wilbur picked it up with shaking hands, surprised by its weight. He flicked the locket open.

Oh, it wasn't a locket. It was a compass. And the picture inside the lid of the compass looked old, weathered by years of travel and hardship. It also looked pretty untouched as of late. Wilbur wouldn't be surprised if Techno had forgotten of its existence.

Wilbur carefully pried the round photo out of the locket-compass-thing, peering at it, even in the darkness of the now empty cell.

It was... it was a family photo. It looked to have been taken when Tommy was maybe one? Techno and Wilbur were standing next to each other, Phil standing behind him, and Tommy resting comfortably in Phil's arms, reaching out for the camera.

Wilbur had nearly forgotten that day. In his memory, it had been a disaster. Tensions were still high from Kristin no longer being there to be in their family photo this year, and the only one who actually wanted to be there was Tommy, and even that was debatable. Tommy probably didn't even know why they were there in the first place.

Had Techno seen things differently? Wilbur wouldn't be caught dead with something that gave him bad memories, and yet here Techno was, holding a photo of a not very stellar day in

his inventory.

"I love you, Wilbur."

A small piece of paper fluttered to the ground, and Wilbur picked it up, still holding the small photo in his other hand.

This piece of paper was also a photo, but it was only of one person.

Kristin.

In the photo, Kristin was laughing at something. In better lighting, Wilbur was sure that he could see that sparkle in her eyes, that warmth she always radiated when she was in the room.

Wilbur's eyes were already puffy from the tears, but he felt that dangerous tugging sensation in his throat.

He quickly put the photos back into the locket and stuffed it into his pocket. He'd think about it later.

For now, Wilbur needed to get a drink or something. A part of him wanted to talk to Phil, but that seemed absurd now. Wilbur had just killed Techno. Phil would probably try to kill *him*.

That's what Wilbur would have done, at any rate. The only reason he hadn't killed Dream when he had killed Tommy was because he was too sly of a—

"Dream hurt and emotionally manipulated Tommy to the point that Tommy became suicidal."
"He wants me!"

No... Dream was only trying to help Wilbur.

Dream had taken both of Tommy's lives. What was to stop him from taking the third?

Wilbur stumbled out of the room, ready to get some damn answers for once in his life. Dream better have a bloody good explanation for what was going on, or else he would not like the consequences.

Dream wasn't there.

Well, he might be in Phil's cell, but Wilbur wasn't willing to check there.

So, instead, Wilbur paced about the room, his hands itching to call someone, maybe Tommy, and try to figure out what was going on in this upside-down world he now lived in.

Hours later, Wilbur was downing a third cup of coffee that night when Dream *finally* returned. At this point, it was likely well into the early hours of the morning, but Wilbur was just relieved that he could finally figure this thing the hell out.

Wilbur stood up, slightly unsteadily, looking Dream in the eye and glaring.

“What—”

Dream interrupted him, voice sharp and quick and leaving no room for error.

“Where’s Technoblade?”

The room froze for a moment as Wilbur and Dream both glared each other. The tension was thick yet brittle, and Wilbur knew that only one misplaced word could shatter everything.

Let it shatter. Wilbur didn’t care. Not anymore.

“I killed him,” Wilbur snapped, “He’s gone, he’s free, that’s the end of it. Now—”

“You *what*?” Dream demanded, his voice angry.

Wilbur didn’t have time to indulge in Dream’s anger. He had some questions he needed to ask, and Dream was going to give him some answers.

“Yes,” Wilbur said impatiently, “Now, what do you—”

“Wilbur, you *idiot!*” Dream slammed his hands on the table, causing the only thing to rattle. “What the hell were you thinking?”

“I wasn’t thinking!” Wilbur threw his hands in the air, “It just happened, alright? Now, if we could please get to the point—”

“The point? The point?” Dream let out a shocked laugh. “The *point*, Wilbur, is that you have just handed a powerful ally back over to Schlatt’s arms, as well as our location. What do you think is going to happen to Tommy because of this?”

“Techno doesn’t know where we are.” Wilbur clenched his hands into tight fists. “And even if he did, Schlatt’s men would have to navigate this entire labyrinth. That gives us plenty of time to seal off more entrances and dig deeper in. Now, if you would just let me finish—”

“No, Wilbur,” Dream said coldly, “You have no idea what you’ve just done.”

“Oh yeah?” Wilbur laughed. “You’re not the boss of me Dream, don’t forget your place.”

Dream took a loud and exaggerated deep breath, walking across the room and leaning against the wall.

“Fine,” Dream huffed, “You’re right. Sorry. I was just worried about what Techno would do and say to Tommy, but I was out of line.”

Wilbur’s heart skipped a beat at the mention of Tommy, and he tried not to think about what sort of torment Tommy could be enduring even as they spoke.

“*What do you think is going to happen to Tommy because of this?*” “*I’m going to give him the biggest hug imaginable.*”

Who was right? Who was wrong? Were either of them correct? Were they all just living in this fantasy of fractured perspectives and incomplete memories? Did it even matter?

Dream moved to leave the room, and Wilbur remembered why he wanted to speak to him so badly in the first place.

“Dream,” Wilbur said coldly, “What do you know about Logstedshire?”

Dream froze. Wilbur held his breath as Dream turned around.

“What the heck is a Logstedshire?” Dream asked, sounding confused, “Is that a drink or something?”

Dream sounded genuine enough, but Wilbur wasn’t going to allow himself to be fooled that easily.

“It’s a place.” Wilbur recalled what Techno said, the image of Tommy being exiled from everything he knew, this time without Wilbur. The image of Dream visiting only to hurt and manipulate him.

Technoblade said Wilbur hurt and manipulated Tommy.

He was wrong.

Right?

Dream hummed, sounding like he was thinking. “I can’t say I’ve heard of it,” he said lightly, “Where’d you hear it from?”

Wilbur frowned, drumming his fingers against the table. “Nobody of importance,” Wilbur said lightly, knowing that Dream would not take the fact he was humoring Technoblade’s lies.

“You can’t believe everything you hear, Wilbur,” Dream said, sounding solemn, or sad, or maybe even pitying, “People lie, you know.”

“Like you?” Wilbur challenged.

Dream tilted his head. “I’m not lying to you.”

“Maybe not now,” Wilbur admitted, though he found the words unnatural in his mouth, “But you have before.”

Dream shrugged, once again moving to exit the room. “They say change comes with the seasons, or something poetic like that.”

Wilbur glared at Dream’s back as he exited the room, the images of Tommy dying flashing across his mind. He resisted the urge to find another dagger in his pocket and throw it straight toward Dream’s heart.

Wilbur still needed Dream, whether he liked it or not.

Besides, they had some moving they needed to do if Schlatt's men were really knocking on their door.

Techno stormed into the situation room, instantly met with harried shouts.

"We've found the entrance!"

"The dog from before is there!"

"Sir, our men our inside, but the only thing they've found so far is a crater."

CHAOS. FIND THE BOY. CRATER??? DOG????

Techno searched the room for Schlatt, finding him at the head of the long table in the center of the room. He instantly pushed past harried White House workers, grabbing Schlatt by the scruff of his neck.

"Where is Tommy?"

Schlatt was staring up at Techno in shock.

"Technoblade?"

Technoblade didn't have time for this.

"I'll give you five seconds before I kill you for being a part of a corrupt system," Techno said, baring his teeth, "Where is Tommy?"

Schlatt sighed, looking a little dead inside, if Techno was being completely honest. "We don't know. He ran off a few hours ago, and we've only just managed to spot him right outside of Dream and Wilbur's base."

NOOO. TOMMY YOU FOOL. MMMM WATCHA SAYYYY, OOOH THAT YOU ONLY MEANT WELL- MISSION IMPOSSIBLE TIME TO RESCUE THE BOY

"Excellent," Techno said, "Tell me where, and I'll get him out in a second."

"Absolutely not," Schlatt said, "We literally just got you back. How did you escape anyway?"

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF US. WE WERE EPIC AND TELEPORTED OUT OF THE PRISON. TECHNOBLADE DIED AND IT WAS TRAGIC.

"Doesn't matter," Techno elected to say instead, not wanting to relive the memory of the knife entering his chest, "Let me get Tommy."

"We've already got Quackity and Fundy on their way to join the rescue team," Schlatt said, probably trying to sound placating but only managing to sound more worried than Techno,

“With any luck, we’ll have Tommy, as well as Phil, back before the sun rises.”

Techno snorted. “Yeah, you clearly don’t know Dream. You need me.”

“The only thing you look like you need is sleep.”

“I could say the same to you,” Techno retorted.

“I’m the president of this mess of a nation, I can’t afford to sleep.”

“And I spent nearly a week in Wilbur and Dream’s hands, lost an arm, and escaped just so I can see my brother, only to find out that he’s run off straight toward the place I just escaped, so would *really appreciate it* if I could help get him back.”

Their conversation was interrupted by a Tubbo slamming straight into Technoblade, his hair a mess. He looked a little bit like he had just rolled out of bed.

TUBBO. OUR BEAUTIFUL BELOVED CHILD. OUR BEAUTIFUL CORRUPTED PRESIDENT. WE DON’T LIKE TUBBO. WE LOVE TUBBO. GOOD TO SEE YOU ARE BETTER AFTER THAT ORDEAL NEARLY A WEEK AGO.

“Pardon me,” Tubbo said absent-mindedly to Technoblade, clearly not aware of who he bumped into. Tubbo turned to Schlatt, practically spitting in anger. “Why didn’t you tell me Tommy left?”

Schlatt sighed, putting his head in his hands. “Tubbo—”

“Don’t Tubbo me!” Tubbo screamed, “Tommy’s my best friend, I should’ve known instantly —”

OH, SOMEONE’S IN TROUBLE. SCHLATT DOESN’T TELL PEOPLE THINGS. NO MORE SECRETS IN THIS WHITE HOUSE. RUMORS ONLY GROW.

“How did you even find out?” Schlatt asked, holding his hand out toward the table looking as though he was reaching for an invisible shot-glass.

“Dream called me.” Tubbo’s voice was quivering with rage now, and Techno was honestly surprised he hadn’t brought down the entire White House. “Imagine how it feels to learn from your *enemy* that your friend has just been kidnapped. Because let me tell you, it doesn’t feel particularly good!”

I DREAMED A DREAM OF KILLING DREAM. ONE DAY MY FRIEND, ONE DAY. CAN WE JUST GIVE THE KID A HUG. I DON’T KNOW, WE GAVE HIM TRAUMA.

“What did he say?” Schlatt said sharply, grabbing a notepad that was sprawled toward the side of the table.

“Oh, just the usual!” Tubbo threw his hands up in the air, sounding near hysterical. Actually, forget near hysterical. The kid was simply hysterical.

*VERY HYSTERICAL. **LIKE US. ALL THE TIME.***

Tubbo continued, obviously not hearing the Chat for obvious reasons. “He said meet him in five days at the rendezvous,” Tubbo listed off, “He said that he’d send the coordinates and the time. He said Technoblade and I should come unarmed, and then no harm would come to Tommy or Philza.”

“So basically, we’ve accomplished nothing,” Schlatt muttered, writing down the information.

“I don’t understand, though,” Tubbo stressed, his voice cooling, “I thought Dream had Technoblade. Did he escape? Why didn’t you tell Tommy *before* he decided to run away and get kidnapped?”

*HA HE DOESN’T KNOW. **WHAT A LOSER. LLLLLL***

“Um, look behind you,” Techno said.

Tubbo jumped and spun around, clutching his chest. He stared at Techno with wide eyes, and Techno wondered if he shouldn’t have maybe found a better way to tell Tubbo he had been in the room the entire time.

*IT’S TOO LATE TO APOLOGIZE. **IT’S TOO LATEEEEE. YOU HAVE TO ADMIT HE LOOKED PRETTY FUNNY. IN MY LIFE I JUST LAUGH AT MY PROBLEMS UNTIL THEY GO AWAY.** Kinda sad dude.*

“Sorry,” Techno said awkwardly, “Anyway, as soon as one of you gives me the coordinates, I’ll be leaving to find Tommy, so if anyone here would be so kind as to do that?”

Schlatt sighed, putting his head in his hands. “You know what? Fine. You’re an adult, but if you get captured again, you’d better be sure as hell you have Tommy out first.”

Techno nodded. “I thought that was obvious.”

“Somebody send Technoblade the coordinates!” Schlatt called out to his people, and somebody replied in the affirmative.

“I’m going with you,” Tubbo said resolutely.

“Absolutely not,” both Schlatt and Techno said in synch.

*LET THE KID COME, IT’LL MAKE THINGS MORE INTERESTING. **NO NEVER LET THE CHILD LEAVE. HOW ABOUT WE JUST GIVE THE KID A DOG.***

“I can handle myself,” Tubbo insisted, “Tommy is gone because of me.”

*NUUUUUUU. **IT WAS TOMMY’S ON STUPIDITY WE ALL KNOW THIS TUBBO. TUBBO SHOULD HAVE KEPT A BETTER EYE ON HIS FRIEND, SHOULDN’T HE? ALL TUBBO HATERS LEAVE.***

“Whoever told you that was lying,” Schlatt said instantly, “Techno, did you get those coordinates?”

Techno pulled his communicator out of his pocket and saw a new message with a set of coordinates.

“Got it,” he said, spinning around, “I’ll return with Tommy.”

HECK YEAH, WE WILL. TOMMY WE ARE COMING.

Tubbo started following, and Schlatt grabbed Tubbo by the arm, probably trying to stop him. Tubbo only ripped his hand away.

“Don’t try to stop me, Schlatt,” Tubbo said coldly, “This is just as much your fault as it is mine, and I’m going to make sure to fix your mistakes.”

Ouch.

OOOOOH. FEEL KINDA BAD FOR HIM NOT GONNA LIE. NO SYMPATHY FOR ONE J’SCHLATT.

Schlatt winced, but that didn’t stop him from standing up. “I cannot with good conscience send another kid out there,” he said, “You’re staying here.”

“Like hell I am!” Tubbo’s voice was back to its original hysteria, and Techno thought that now would be a good time to leave. It wasn’t exactly like they had all the time in the world, after all.

So he did, leaving the chaos between the president and secretary of state behind.

He had Tommy to save.

Tubbo was angry.

But that much was probably obvious.

“Like hell I am!” Tubbo shouted at Schlatt, wanting his words to hurt, wanting Schlatt to *feel* what he was saying, “I have participated in more wars than you have even *seen*, and I am not about to be a coward like you!”

Schlatt’s eyes flashed with hurt, and Tubbo reveled with it. Good. He should feel hurt. If he hadn’t convinced Tubbo to keep the entire Techno situation from Tommy, Tubbo wouldn’t have to have been the one to cause Tommy to run away. If Schlatt had just *told* Tubbo that Tommy was missing, Tubbo wouldn’t have had to hear the news from *Dream* of all people.

That conversation played over and over in his head like a broken disc, trying to torment Tubbo to death.

“You messed up, Tubbo,” Dream had said quietly, “Tommy came rushing to me, you know. He demanded to know where Techno was, said everyone had betrayed him.”

“You’re lying,” Tubbo whispered, “What the hell have you done to Tommy?”

“I think the better question is what have *you* done to Tommy, don’t you think?” Dream asked, “I mean, I wasn’t the one who told him to come to me.”

“You’re lying,” Tubbo said again, raising his voice, “You’re lying, stop *lying*! This was you, this was all *you*—”

Dream laughed. “Once again, Tubbo, you prove yourself to be an idiot in denial. Always pretending that you can do no wrong, am I right?”

“That’s not... that’s not what I said,” Tubbo stuttered, leaning against the wall, “I just want to know where Tommy is. I don’t mean to hurt him, I don’t—”

“Like when you exiled him?”

Tubbo froze. Dream... Dream wasn’t supposed to know about that. Dream *wasn’t supposed to know about that*.

Tubbo straightened and took a deep breath, donning his president demeanor. Crying all over Dream was going to get nothing done.

“I’m sure I don’t know what you mean.”

Dream’s laugh was cold and harsh, and Tubbo *hated it*. “Oh, it’s nothing,” he said, “I mean, it couldn’t be like *you’re* the same Tubbo who took one look at Tommy after he screwed up and decided he was a liability, that was a different—”

Tubbo’s heart was beating so quickly that it felt like fireworks were there again, burning against his skin, but he needed to stay calm, he needed to pull himself together.

“Dream,” he said coldly, “Tell me where Tommy is.”

“Oh?” Dream’s voice sounded intrigued, and it sent a shiver down Tubbo’s spine. “And what will you do if I don’t?”

“Dream, I have access to an entire army,” Tubbo threatened, “I can—”

“*You*, Tubbo, cannot do anything,” Dream corrected, “You’re not the president anymore, remember?”

“And you think our current president will sit idly by?” Tubbo challenged, “I thought you were smarter than that.”

“You think you’re going to be able to find him?” Dream challenged right back, “You should’ve kept a closer eye on Tommy, because I’ll make sure that you will never see him again. Well, actually...”

“Enough with the games,” Tubbo said shortly, changing into some clothes that he could actually travel in, “Where’s Tommy?”

Dream tutted. “That’s not how negotiations work, Tubbo. You need to promise me something in return.”

Tubbo knew he didn’t have very many good options. He couldn’t really afford to hand over the country.

“Myself,” Tubbo said instantly, “You can have me. You can have my absolute loyalty. Just let Tommy go.”

Dream laughed. “Yeah?” he asked, “How about this? Same plan as before. How many days has it been? Two? Five days from now, meet me at the rendezvous, *alone* and *unarmed*, and I’ll give you Tommy. If Technoblade comes with you, you can have Phil as well.”

This time, determination gave way to confusion. “I thought you had Technoblade?”

“Those are my terms,” Dream said, ignoring Tubbo’s question, “Do you accept?”

Tubbo’s hands slick with sweat, but he resisted the urge to rub them against his jeans. Even though this entire conversation was over the phone, Tubbo felt like eyes were all over him, like Dream would *know* if he showed any sign of weakness.

“I accept,” Tubbo said stiffly, “Until then.”

Dream ended the call, Tubbo collapsed against the wall, resisting the urge to burst into tears.

He had always hated meetings like that with Dream, especially after the meeting concerning Tommy’s exile.

Tubbo thought he was done. He thought he was done playing the authority. Of course he wanted to help, of course he wanted to *contribute*, but he didn’t want to be in charge. That wasn’t his job anymore.

So maybe that was why he was so angry at Schlatt. Because this was *his* job. Schlatt was supposed to be the one negotiating with Dream, not Tubbo. Schlatt was the one who was supposed to tell him these things so that Tubbo *wouldn’t* find himself roped into those sorts of phone calls with Dream.

Is this how Tommy felt? Had he felt this horrible gut-wrenching panic that could have been lessened if someone had just *told* him?

Miscommunication was an enemy of humanity, Tubbo decided.

“Tubbo, listen to me,” Schlatt said, not raising his voice, “It’s not safe. You are sixteen years old, I don’t—”

“Seventeen,” Tubbo replied stiffly, “I’m seventeen, even if my birthday hasn’t rolled along in this timeline yet, I sure as hell passed it, and I was alone in my office, Tommy gone, and I

don't want to experience that again!"

Oh. Tubbo was crying again, wasn't he?

"Oh kid," Schlatt said quietly, "It's gonna be okay. We'll find Tommy, I promise."

Tubbo swallowed back his tears, trying to stem back the guilt and shame and embarrassment he was feeling over this entire ordeal. He should be keeping it together, he shouldn't be crying in the middle of the situation room of all places.

Schlatt stood up, opening up his arms. "You don't have to accept it," he said, "But you really look like you need it."

And before Tubbo quite knew what he was doing, he rushed into Schlatt's arms, sobbing into his suit.

"I'm sorry," Tubbo sobbed, "I don't hate you, not anymore, I'm just so angry, and Tommy's gone, and Dream—"

"It's okay," Schlatt said, standing perfectly still as he held Tubbo far less tightly than Tubbo was holding onto him, "And I'm sorry too. You're just a kid. You're just like Tommy. I didn't want to make you panic when there was hope of getting Tommy back before the morning."

"You should've told me," Tubbo sniffed angrily.

"I know. Guess I've still got some growing to do, huh?"

Tubbo snorted. "Damn right."

"It'll be okay, kid," Schlatt promised again, blissfully unaware of Tubbo's promise to Dream, "We'll get Tommy and Phil back and kill Dream. I'll make sure of it."

If only things were that simple.

Chapter End Notes

Our first healthy hug in the entire fic other than flashbacks!

yes i checked.

Tommy will probably be in the next chapter but i decided to leave y'all in suspense because i have a life.

Thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

also happy birthday Tommy you are unconscious somewhere right now in this fic <3

Dogs Galore

Chapter Summary

Oh look more techno trauma.

we finally figure out who the dog is

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, kidnapping, panic, some blood, vaguely referenced claustrophobia

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

By the time Techno arrived at the scene, a few men were already standing outside of the entrance, holding cross bows at the ready.

Technoblade raised his arm in surrender to make it clear he wasn't a threat. To them, at least. To Dream, on the other hand...

WE SHALL TURN HIM INTO A FLEA. AND THEN PUT THAT FLEA INTO A BOX. AND THEN PUT THAT BOX INTO A BIGGER BOX. AND THEN MAIL THAT BOX TO OURSELVES. AND TheN CRUSH IT WITH A SLEDGEHAMMER. BLOOD. BLOOD BLOOD BLOOD.

"I come in peace," Techno said dryly, "Actually, I've come to help find my brother."

The men lowered their crossbows, nodding. "We haven't found anything so far," they informed Techno.

Techno refused to accept that reality.

"Well now you have me," he said, pushing past the guards and peering down at the stairway into the ground.

SECRET TUNNEL. SECRET TUNNEL. IN THE MOUNTAIN. SECRET SECRET SECRET SECRET TUNNNNEELLLLLLLLLL.

Techno ignored them, instead opting to sprint down the stone stairs. As he got deeper down, he became increasingly more aware of the stone walls closing in, of the darkness of the tunnels, of the mustiness of the air.

It was fine, though. Sure, Techno had hoped he wouldn't have to come here again for at least another week or something, but you couldn't have everything in life.

Techno reached the bottom of the stairs he had thought to be his salvation only this morning and spotted a small TNT crater in the ground. It looked almost like a creeper hole, except for the fact that there were too many torches on the walls for monsters to actually spawn.

HOLE. THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE TUNNEL. THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE TUNNEL. THERE'S A HOLE. THERE'S A HOLE. THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BOTTOM OF THE TUNNEL.

Techno lowered himself into the hole and bent down at the bottom of it, looking to see if there was anything that could be used for evidence.

The only thing he found were some scattered remains of now unidentifiable items.

"Hey, Technoblade?"

Techno leapt to his feet and pulled a crossbow out of his inventory. Spinning around, he shot the arrow straight toward his attacker's heart.

Fortunately for everyone involved, Quackity managed to dodge in the nick of time, the bolt hitting the back of the tunnel instead of Quackity himself.

"Woah, man!" Quackity exclaimed, staring at the bolt that nearly took his life, "That was-that was a bit overkill, don't you think?"

Techno's heart was beating like Carl's hooves in a gallop, and he sucked in a breath between his teeth.

"Sorry about that," he said, getting to his feet, "I thought you were... a threat."

AND THE PTSD STRIKES AGAIN. OH, I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST REFLEXES TBH. YOU GET TRAUMA, YOU GET TRAUMA, EVERYONE GETS TRAUMA. EXCEPT US. WE ARE TOO COOL FOR TRAUMA.

Quackity frowned. "Yeah, okay," he said, "Anyway, we haven't been able to find them anywhere. We're currently trying to see if we can't dig out the tunnels and see if there's another side, but so far we got nada."

Techno nodded, climbing out of the hole. "Alright then," he said, "I think I remember the main path to my cell, which might mean nothing at all, if I'm being completely honest. In case you haven't already noticed, this place is kind of a maze."

It's pretty a-MAZE-ing. DAD. DAD JOKES ARE FOR FOOLS. WE ARE SURROUNDED BY CRAZY PEOPLE. NINE-ONE-ONE WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED A DAD JOKE, WE NEED EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. WEEHOOOO WHEHOOOO WEHOOOOOOOO. DOPPLER EFFECT, POG.

Quackity snorted. "Yeah, we noticed."

Techno tried to lead Quackity down the tunnels he had sprinted down earlier, trying not to feel the phantom pain of his arm in the coldness of the tunnels, trying not pull his sword or crossbow out every time Quackity made a sudden movement.

“Are you alright, Technoblade?” Quackity asked, “You can sit this one out if you want to.”

YES. NO. WE’LL NEVER GIVE UP ON TOMMY. THAT WASN’T EVEN THE QUESTION?? NEVER GONNA GIVE YOU UP, NEVER GONNA LET YOU DOWN, NEVER GONNA RUN AROUND OR DESERT YOU.

“I’m fine,” Techno said, somewhat harshly as they turned down yet another one of these damn tunnels, “I’m just worried about Tommy, that’s all.”

He was fine.

They reached the end of the tunnel that Techno was ninety-percent sure led back to his cell, except for the fact that it was, you know, closed off.

“We are currently facing one of two options,” Techno informed Quackity as he pulled out a pickaxe, “Either I have made a wrong turn—”

“Or this actually leads down to the tunnel we need,” Quackity finished for him, grinning wildly and pulling out a pickaxe of his own, “Guess there’s only one way to find out, huh?”

ALRIGHT EVERYBODY PLACE YOUR BETS HERE. I BET IT WILL BE NOTHING. I BET IT WILL BE SOMETHING. I BET BOTH. ISN’T IT ALWAYS SOMETHING? LIFE IS NOTHINGNESS. DIG DIG DIG DIG DIG DIG DIG DIG

They both began digging up the stone, and Techno hoped that they would actually *find* something for once in their lives.

And then their pickaxes made a hollow sound against the stone.

“Oh my god,” Quackity said, “Did we hit something?”

“It could be a cave system,” Techno replied. He refused to be the optimist in this situation; it was a really great way to get killed.

And yet, as they uncovered the last of the stone, Techno saw yet more of that familiar hall. Heck, the torches were still up. You’d think Dream would be better at hiding his tracks.

LOL WHAT A LOSER. SO SAD. WE’RE ABOUT TO FIND OUR BOY. I WANT TO SEE OUR LITTLE BOY. HERE HE COMES.

Quackity pulled out his communicator, probably calling Fundy or someone. “Get people over to the coordinates I’m about to send you.”

Yep, definitely Fundy.

Technoblade may be a man of strategy, but a man of patience he was not.

Okay, that wasn't even true. Technoblade was indeed a man of patience as well as strategy. However, he was definitely not waiting around for Dream to drag his little brother farther away from him.

Besides, he was Technoblade. He could handle himself.

THIS FEELS LIKE A BAD IDEA. I WANT TO SEE MY LITTLE BOY. HERE HE COMES.

Techno dodged down the hall, looking both ways for any doors to any prisons. He came across an iron door that was slightly ajar, and he peeked into it.

Oh.

It was his own cell.

There were a few potatoes rolling around on the ground, probably from when Techno died and dropped what little remained in his inventory.

The compass wasn't there.

To be honest, Techno hadn't exactly thought about the compass anytime recently. The compass pointed to their old home, back when Wilbur and Tommy lived there. It just used to be some source of small comfort when Techno was away, especially after he stopped adventuring with Phil and went off on his own.

He hadn't thought about it recently because... well, he knew exactly where everyone was.

Techno hoped that Wilbur had it somewhere safe. The idea of it being in Dream's hands were enough to make Techno want to puke.

"Anyone in there?" Quackity asked.

Technoblade snapped his head over to Quackity, once again reaching for a weapon. Quackity instantly had his hands in the air.

Technoblade sighed. Right. Just Quackity. He knew that.

"No," Techno intoned lowly, "Just my—"

His voice caught in his throat, and he glanced back at the cell. He spotted some blood on the ground. Was that *his* blood?

Techno felt sick.

"Nobody's in here," he reiterated, slamming the door shut behind him, "Let's keep looking.

TECHNO YOU NEED THERAPY. PLEASE TELL PEOPLE. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE. WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR, MAKES NO DIFFERENCE WHO YOU ARE, WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR, TECHNOBLADE GETS THERAPPPPPYYYY.

As was a common theme in Techno's life, he ignored the voices in his head, instead continuing hastily down the hall, searching for some sign.

Fundy and other men joined the search minutes later. Techno spotted a few dogs by their sides, but he was a little too preoccupied by finding Tommy to worry about Chat's insistence to see them.

*DOG? **DOG?** DOGGO? **DOG?** PUPPPY???*

So far in their search, they had only managed to find the kitchen, a few bedrooms that Techno assumed belonged to Wilbur and Dream respectively, and an empty cell filled with feathers, and once again, blood.

Techno's stomach churned at the thought of Phil getting tortured, but he ignored it.

Phil was strong. He'd be fine.

But if Dream knew what was good for him, he wasn't going to dare *touch* Philza's wings.

As Technoblade came to yet another dead end in this still never-ending stream of hallways, he heard a bark.

To Technoblade's credit, he did not shoot the dog that had managed to sneak up on him. His heart only skipped a beat. That wasn't horrible. That was a perfectly normal reaction to a dog sneaking up on you.

*DOG. **DOG DOG DOG.** WAIT... DO I RECOGNIZE THIS DOG? **MAYBE??***

Techno sighed, kneeling down in front of the dog, which only looked incredibly dirty and covered in.. was that *Techno's hair*?

"Well then," he said, "Apparently you are recognizable. You also apparently have some of my hair."

The dog only put his nose into Techno's only hand, wagging his tail fiercely. Techno sighed, brushing off some of the hairs. It was somewhat disturbing to see your own hair on a dog with dried blood, Techno had to admit.

*ONLY SOMEWHAT DISTURBING. **YES ANOTHER NORMAL DAY, MY HAIR IS ON A DOG, SOMEWHAT DISTURBING BUT YOU KNOW, LIFE. LIFE CAN BE PRETTY DISTURBING IT'S TRUE. WAIT. I KNOW THIS DOG. SAY CLARENCIO.***

"Clarencio?" Technoblade asked more than really said. What sort of request was that? Chat was always strange, but this time was unique.

The dog growled momentarily before returning to its docile state.

*OH MY GOD. **IT IS NOT. IT IS. MAX????***

"Max?" Technoblade asked again.

The dog perked up and barked.

MAX. MAX OUR BELOVED. MAX THE BEAUTIFUL FIRST MEMBER OF OUR HOUND ARMY. MAX, WE LOVE YOU SO MUCH. KILLER OF CLARENCIO THE LLAMA.

Ah, so this dog was from the future. Cool.

Techno had no more time to waste on it.

Standing up and ignoring Chat's pleas to the contrary, Techno gave the dog, Max, a solemn nod before turning around and continuing his search.

Max, of course, followed him.

Of course he did.

UH HE'S YOUR DOG? IT'S KIND OF HIS JOB TO FOLLOW YOU. MAX, MAX, MAX, MAX-WHERE IS TOMMY. I WANNA SEE MY LITTLE BOY. HERE HE COMES?

"Wait!" Fundy called out, "I think I've found something!"

Techno was now running to Fundy, ready to see what he found because maybe they could finally find a damn lead in this maze of sealed-off tunnels.

But instead of an open corridor or Dream's head on a spike, Fundy held a small slip of paper, staring at it with horror on his face.

Techno quickly snatched it away, scanning the contents.

If you keep looking for us, Phil's losing one of his wings.

It wasn't Wilbur's handwriting, thank god. It must be Dream's. The actual content of the message was enough to make Techno's stomach to churn, and he quickly flipped the slip of paper over to see if there was a postscript or terms or anything.

Oh, and don't worry. I'll take good care of Tommy. (:

Tommy woke up in a bed.

That in itself wouldn't be strange, except for the fact that he could smell the mustiness of the underground again.

Tommy instantly shot out of the bed, breathing erratically.

He shouldn't be here, *he shouldn't be here, he shouldn't be here.*

Memories of the night before flashed through Tommy's vision, and he shuddered. How could he have been so stupid?

Stupid, useless child.

Tommy brought his hands up and tugged at his hair so that it hurt. He couldn't breathe, but he couldn't stay here. He couldn't... after what happened last time with Dream... how long would he even stay *Tommy*?

Dream was just trying to protect him, Dream was only being a good friend, Tommy was being ungrateful—

“No,” Tommy whispered to himself, his voice hoarse, “No, no, no that’s not true.”

Isn't it?

Tommy couldn't stay here. He couldn't lose himself. Not again.

Please, not again.

Chapter End Notes

Two chapters in two days, in this economy?

The dog is max. i'm so sorry all of you who hoped otherwise. It was max from the beginning.

Those who correctly guessed the dog are diapson, yak army, etchasketch, and nova who has a different username on ao3 but i'm lazy. (some of you vaguely were correct, but i'm too tired to figure that out right now)

Also I have a fic rec! Do you like Ranboo centric? Do you like mafia aus? Do you like sbi? Do you like Dream being a terrible person (if not i'm not sure why you're reading this fic)? Then read [I've got a bullet with your name on it](#). It has all of these things and more! <333

Anyway, thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, sorry for the shorter chapter, and please be nice in the comments! <3

Fly, You Fools

Chapter Summary

Tommy has a great time

Wilbur is confused.

Schlatt is facing life.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, trauma, child abuse, manipulation, gaslighting, mentioned amputation, referenced alcoholism, media propaganda, Dream,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The next morning was hell.

Schlatt had gotten little to no sleep between Technoblade getting back, Tommy getting kidnapped, the search party searching for Tommy, Tubbo pacing until Schlatt finally just ordered him to at least sit down on a couch, where he promptly fell asleep, and the impending chaos of Technoblade's return.

See, Schlatt was getting himself a cup of coffee, hoping it would take the edge off of his never ceasing want for a *drink*, when Technoblade stormed up to him, grabbing Schlatt by the scruff of his shirt.

"You want to tell me what the hell happened?" Technoblade snarled, his eye blazing. Even without an arm, Technoblade looked like he could snap Schlatt's neck in an instant.

Technoblade had been terrifying earlier, but this was arguably worse.

"I take it you didn't find Tommy then," Schlatt said tiredly.

Tubbo was going to be devastated. Schlatt could only hope that Tommy was at least unharmed, but knowing Dream, that was so unlikely there was really not much point in hoping it.

"You were supposed to keep him *safe*." Technoblade gritted his teeth and squeezed his eyes shut before letting go of Schlatt in a forced, jerking motion. "I don't know why I expected you'd actually do it."

“I have been keeping him safe,” Schlatt protested sharply, “The kid literally climbed out of the window.”

Technoblade was clenching his fist in a similar way Schlatt did when he wanted a drink. Schlatt had a feeling that Technoblade probably wanted a weapon instead of an alcoholic beverage.

“Then you should have stopped him,” Technoblade said simply, “Don’t you have, I don’t know, an entire nation at your command?”

Schlatt snorted. “Listen, if I had *known* Tommy was climbing out the window, of course I would’ve stopped him! But we didn’t realize he was gone until a few hours after he had already left.”

Technoblade gave Schlatt an unimpressed look. “See, it sounds to me that you’re just making excuses to save your own skin.”

That was the last thing that was on Schlatt’s mind, although he would admit that there may be a little bit of fear in his defensiveness. Look, he had a long day, okay?

“Maybe I am,” Schlatt admitted, taking a large gulp of his coffee and combing his hair back with his fingers. God, he needed a shower. “But I’m tired, and I’m worried, and you’re not one of the people I have to keep it together for.”

“See, you’ll have to forgive me if I doubt that,” Technoblade said dryly, “Considering that you’ve *lost* Tommy and Phil within the past twenty-four hours.”

Schlatt knew that Technoblade would take a long time to adjust to him, considering that Technoblade was an anarchist and Schlatt was the president of a country, but this was probably the worst scenario they could be in at the moment. Honestly, it was a damn miracle that Technoblade hadn’t pulled out his crossbow and shot Schlatt through the heart.

“You know what, you’re right,” Schlatt agreed, “But we kind of need to work together if you want to get Tommy back, so as long as you don’t try to kill me, you can be as angry with me as you’d like.”

Technoblade glared. “Fine,” he agreed, “But I’ll have you know that this is a temporary alliance.”

“Yeah, well I’ll have you know that I probably won’t be the president of this nation for much longer,” Schlatt said, taking another sip of his coffee.

He must’ve jinxed himself, because at that moment, Quackity burst into the room, holding what looked to be a newspaper in his hand.

Fantastic. No rest for the weary, it seemed.

“Quackity, I thought you were going to get some rest?” Schlatt said, more for the sake of saying it than anything else. Both he and Quackity knew that neither of them were going to have sleep anytime soon.

Sure enough, Quackity snorted, rolling his eyes. “Yeah, funny joke. Anyway—” Quackity looked Schlatt dead in the eyes. “You’re screwed.”

Massaging his eyes, Schlatt held out his hand, and Quackity handed him the newspaper. Schlatt opened it up with a loud rustle, and the title on the front page was enough for Schlatt to know that he was going to have to have his speech writers prepare a speech immediately.

J’Schlatt Accused of Abuse of Staff

It wasn’t even three in the morning.

Schlatt quickly scanned the article his eyes quickly picking up lines such as “*concerning claims*” “*accused of harming sixteen-year-old secretary and rest of staff*” “*alcohol abuse*” “*past over-taxation*”, and “*refused to comment, only fanning the fire to the rumors*”.

Technoblade snorted, reading over Schlatt’s shoulder. “Well, I can’t say you didn’t have it coming.”

Schlatt shot Technoblade an annoyed glare, and Technoblade instantly pulled a sword out of his inventory.

Schlatt reflexively took a large step away from Technoblade and toward Quackity. Quackity just looked resigned, like he had seen this before.

Technoblade was glaring at Schlatt, but he gave his sword an annoyed expression as he returned it to his inventory.

“Just... don’t,” Technoblade huffed. He moved toward the door. “I’m going to see if Sam’s done with that arm yet.”

The chances of Sam completing an arm over night was not all that likely, especially considering that he hadn’t returned to his base since he came to deliver Tommy’s communicator to Schlatt.

Speaking of communicator’s, Technoblade would probably need a new one as well.

Schlatt would feel bad for Sam, but he had literally just given Dream of all people tiny explosives, and whether Sam was ignorant of Dream’s intentions or not, Schlatt couldn’t really find it within his heart to feel all that sorry.

Quackity and Schlatt watched as Technoblade slammed the door behind him.

“When we get Phil back, he’s going to need to convince Technoblade to get therapy,” Quackity stated grimly, “He nearly shot me through the chest earlier.”

Schlatt swore. “Do you think he’s dangerous?”

Schlatt wanted to work with Technoblade, but he wasn’t willing to put his staff at risk, especially considering that Tubbo had vivid memories of Technoblade shooting a firework rocket into his chest.

Quackity shrugged. “Maybe?” he offered, “Only when you trigger him, though, so if we avoid sneaking up on him and glaring at him, and probably more things to come, it’ll be alright.”

Schlatt snorted. “Ah, yes, that’s definitely comforting.”

“Tubbo will be okay,” Quackity reassured Schlatt, “I kind of doubt Technoblade will hurt him. I mean, he managed to stop himself from hurting you, and he hates you from what I can tell.”

Schlatt nodded, forcing the concern from out of his mind for the time being. Worst came to worst, they had to arrange a different place for Technoblade to stay. Hopefully, Technoblade could exercise enough self-control to not accidentally kill one of his staff.

Speaking of staff, there were still those unfortunately true accusations of abuse Schlatt had to deal with.

Schlatt handed Quackity the paper. “Are there any others?” he asked.

Quackity nodded. “Oh yeah,” he said. He pulled another paper out of his inventory. “Most of them agreed with the one you just read, but there are a few that spin the story differently.”

Schlatt took the paper from Quackity, once again scanning the contents.

“Dangerous criminal TommyInnit” “spreading lies to defame the president” “shameful Secretary Underscore didn’t squash such rumors” “Innit should be punished and exiled for such crimes.”

Yeah, that was enough of that. Schlatt crumbled up the paper in disgust, tossing it to the bin in the corner. The ball of paper hit the wall and landed on the floor next to the bin.

Typical.

“Okay, get my speechwriters to prepare something,” Schlatt said, walking over to the trash bin, “Make sure to tell them that I’m going to confirm the rumors, so they don’t have to sugarcoat anything.”

Schlatt bent over to pick up the crumbled up newspaper and drop it into the trash can, when he turned around, he saw Quackity wearing a strange grimace.

“What’s wrong?” Schlatt asked.

“Are you sure?” Quackity confirmed, “Telling the entire country?”

Schlatt nodded. “Well, I did do those things, and it would be nice to at least hold myself accountable.”

Quackity frowned. “You’ll be forced to resign, you know.”

“I know.”

This time, Quackity scowled, looking frustrated. “Don’t you know what that means? Don’t you realize what you’ll be *abandoning*—”

“I won’t be abandoning anything,” Schlatt said quickly, “I might get a few years of jail time, perfectly deserved mind you, but I have faith that you’ll be able to manage the country well enough until the term is over.”

This Quackity wasn’t the same Quackity that went a war path to kill Technoblade. This Quackity hadn’t seen the things the old Quackity had seen.

Quackity stared, looking a bit dumbfounded if Schlatt was being completely honest. “Me?”

Schlatt laughed. “You are my vice, remember?”

“Well, yeah,” Quackity admitted, rubbing the back of his neck, “It’s just that you’ve been a good president recently.”

“Yeah and before that I was pretty terrible,” Schlatt said bluntly, “It’s like I’ve told Tubbo. I can stand suffering the consequences for my own actions. You just have to promise me you won’t repeat them.”

Quackity blinked. “What-of course not!”

Schlatt smiled, clapping his hands together. “Then I don’t see the problem here,” Schlatt said, “Just get those speechwriters to prepare that speech, alright? And who knows, maybe if we’re lucky, Tommy will just pick the lock of his prison cell and escape for us.”

Schlatt said that last statement in a grimmer tone, a reminder of what was going on.

Quackity sighed heavily. “We all saw the security cameras; the kid couldn’t even muster up the courage to break into your office.”

Tommy could *not* stay here.

He instantly got out of the bed he was sitting in, shoving the sheets off of him. Tommy was relieved to see that no ropes dug into his wrists, but he did have to question the action. Why wouldn’t Dream tie him up? Did Dream really think Tommy was so loyal?

No, no, Dream would be so angry. Don’t leave, don’t leave, don’t betray him again.

Tommy clutched at his head, like that would stop the steady stream of thoughts poisoning his mind. He couldn’t... he couldn’t let Dream control him like this. He had to get out, *he had to get out.*

Tommy stumbled toward the door—which was only a few steps away, this room was *small*—reaching for the handle and trying to open it.

The door didn’t budge. The handle didn’t even move an inch.

That's when Tommy broke out of his panic enough to realize that the door was iron.

Crap.

Tommy's breathing quickened, and he tugged at the door knob violently, as if that would change the fact that the door wasn't going to move. The only thing it really served to do was make a bloody lot more noise than Tommy would *like*.

Already, Tommy could hear Dream's voice in his mind, demanding to know why Tommy was so scared, why Tommy was trying to escape. Already, Tommy felt his vision blur.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry," Tommy whispered under his breath, trying to keep it together and failing.

Tommy needed to get out. Tommy needed to get *out*.

His hands were shaking, and his hand kept slipping off the door handle. He had to leave; he had to get out of here, but he couldn't breathe, Tommy could barely see past the dizziness in his head.

Tommy sunk to the ground, searching his inventory for gapples or *something, he needed Wilbur; he needed Dream, he needed something.*

His inventory was empty.

That's right, didn't Tommy empty it yesterday? Didn't he watch it all get blown up? Didn't he watch *Dream* blow it all up?

Prime, Tommy was so stupid. Tommy's new communicator had been in there. Sam and Schlatt were going to be so *mad*.

But Tommy wasn't with Sam and Schlatt; Tommy was with Dream. Tommy needed to do what Dream said, Tommy—

Tommy needed to get a bloody *grip*.

His breathing still painful and panicky, Tommy dug his hands into his pockets, as if those were hiding the precious gapples that Tommy so craved.

The only thing Tommy found was a useless paperclip. What was he supposed to do with that? Stab Dream's eyes out? Dream was wearing a mask, so that would be pretty *useless*.

No, what was Tommy thinking? He couldn't fight Dream. He *shouldn't* fight Dream. Dream was his friend. Dream only wanted to protect him. Dream would be so mad if he realized Tommy was even thinking of doing such a violent thing like stabbing his eyes out, what was Tommy even thinking?

Tommy shook himself mentally, frantically twisting the paperclip in his hands. He needed to stop thinking like that. Dream wasn't his friend, Dream *wasn't* his friend.

"I'm your friend, remember?"

Tommy jumped to his feet, pacing around frantically, practically breaking the paperclip in his hands. He had to get out, or he was going to lose his damn mind, and then he would be like Wilbur, and Tommy *didn't want to be like Wilbur*.

Tommy forced himself to take a deep breath, but it felt more like a thousand needles had entered his lungs.

He did his best to focus his vision on the iron door; he needed to figure out a way to get *out*.

Tommy continued twisting the paperclip back and forth as he frantically thought up ways he could possibly break through the door.

Wait a minute... the *paperclip*.

Iron doors were sturdier than wooden doors. You couldn't break the lock like rudimentary thieves. You couldn't kick the door down.

You *could* pick the lock. If you were good enough, that is.

It was a good thing that Tommy was very famous for his lock-picking skills.

Still, despite Tommy's incredible skill at lock-picking, it took him about twenty tries to actually get the door open. Between trying not to panic over Dream coming, between trying not to panic over the actual lock-picking itself, and between having to *pick the lock of an iron door*, Tommy actually thought he did quite well.

As soon as the door creaked open, Tommy was out like a flash, sprinting through the halls. He needed to get out, he needed to get *out*—

Tommy skidded down one of the many halls, not having the breath to swear when he came to a dead-end. After spinning around so quickly that his shoes skidded against the stone and he nearly fell face first, he went down the other hall, only to find a dead-end five minutes later.

Who the hell designed this place?

It was a bloody *maze*.

Tommy's lungs felt deprived of air, and his panic only grew as he couldn't find the way out, *where was the way out, why couldn't he get out, he needed to get out...*

Tommy's footsteps echoed loudly against his ears as he continued running down the halls, searching desperately for an exit, searching desperately for a way out—

Tommy's eyes landed on an iron door on the side of the wall.

Tommy skidded to a halt, stumbling toward the door, pulling out the paperclip in his pocket, Tommy immediately started picking the lock.

This time it only took him ten tries.

Tommy slammed the door open with no regard for how the door echo loudly across the hall. Tommy needed to get out, he didn't care if Dream knew, as long as he *escaped*.

Tommy dashed into the room and stopped suddenly when he realized that that was all it was. It was a room. A small room. It wasn't a hallway, it was just another dead-end, damnit.

"Tommy?"

Tommy spun around at the sound of Phil's voice.

Phil looked... well he looked better than Tommy imagined Techno looking about now. At the very least, Phil wasn't missing any limbs, and his wings were mostly intact. Emphasis on *mostly*.

There was a small patch on his wings that was missing feathers. Had Dream... had Dream taken them out? Why? To hurt him?

"Phil?" Tommy whispered, his voice hoarse from all that panicked breathing that he was still doing even now.

Phil's hands and feet and even wings were tied up in ropes, but he still managed to smile at Tommy, even though Tommy could see the fear in his eyes.

"Yeah, it's me mate," Phil said, "Mind telling me what you're doing here?"

Tommy suddenly remembered why he came to this place to begin with, even before Dream had gotten his hands on him.

Rushing up to Phil, Tommy immediately began fumbling with the ropes. "I came to rescue you," Tommy said hurriedly, "Come on, we need to go, we need to go, where's Techno, we need to—"

"Tommy?"

Tommy froze, his hands still hovering over the ropes tying up Phil's legs. He didn't dare look behind him, he didn't dare see who was probably standing over him right now, who was probably glaring at him with disappointment, who Phil was glaring up at with such blazing fury—

A hand clasped Tommy by the shoulder, and Dream's voice whispered so closely to his ear that Tommy felt his breath tickle his skin.

"What are you doing?"

Tommy couldn't speak. He could barely breathe. He had messed up. He had been bad. Why couldn't he have just stayed in his bedroom like Dream wanted? Why did he have to be so stupid?

Dream grabbed Tommy firmly by the other arm, and Tommy let out a small gasp.

“I’m sorry, I—”

Phil interrupted Tommy, his voice venomous in fury. “Get your hands off my son, or I swear you regret it.”

Dream laughed, and the hairs on the back of Tommy’s neck stood up. But no, he was supposed to trust Dream; why was he scared?

“Come on, Tommy,” Dream said, his voice cold as he began Tommy away.

“Get your bloody hands off of him!” Phil shouted, jerking forward, “I swear to god, if you hurt him, I will hunt you down and make you regret the day you were born.”

For whatever reason, it was as though Phil’s words snapped Tommy back to reality, snapped Tommy back to the situation he was in. Tommy was trying to escape; Tommy was trying to save Phil; Tommy was currently in *Dream’s* hands.

So while Dream snorted, saying “You can try,” Tommy surged forward, trying to break himself free of Dream’s grip.

“Get off of me, get off of me!” Tommy screamed, kicking and punching and twisting and biting and doing everything in the book.

Dream simply managed to get a much firmer, much more *painful* grip around Tommy, dragging him out of the cell.

“No! No!” Tommy screamed, half-hysterical. He couldn’t do this again, he couldn’t do this again. “Get off of me! Let go of me! Phil! Phil!”

Phil was also shouting, Tommy was pretty sure, and he saw Phil try to get to Tommy before falling flat on his face.

When Dream closed the door to Phil’s cell, Tommy felt true panic set in.

“Phil! PHIL!” Tommy shrieked, “TECHNOBLADE! No! No, no, no, no, WILBUR!”

Dream clasped a hand over Tommy’s mouth, and Tommy bit down, hoping to get Dream to drop him.

“*Tommy*,” Dream whispered harshly, “Do you really want Wilbur to come? Do you really want Wilbur to hurt you? To hurt Phil?”

Already, Tommy could hear Wilbur’s voice calling out for him, and he surged forward, trying to get to his older brother. Anyone would be better than Dream, anyone, please, please, please

“Remember what Wilbur did to Technoblade?” Dream asked, “Don’t you realize what he might do to Phil if he thinks Phil’s been hurting you? Do you really want to be that selfish?”

Tommy froze. He didn't want Phil to get hurt. He didn't want that.

Tommy stayed silent, and he allowed Dream to drag him back into his room, somehow taking far less time than Tommy did in getting from Phil's cell to Tommy's cell.

Dream threw Tommy into the cell, and Tommy let out a small cry of pain as he landed forcefully on the stone, jarring his bones.

"I'll be back," Dream said. From his voice, Tommy knew it wasn't a good thing.

"Dream, please, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, please, I wasn't—"

Tommy shouted in surprise when Dream's fist connected with Tommy's nose with a loud crack. Curling in on himself, Tommy brought his hands to his nose with watering eyes and found blood on his fingertips.

"I have to fix the mess your selfishness and stupidity caused." Dream stared down at Tommy with such contempt even with the mask to cover the majority of his face. "Stay put."

Oh, why did he have to be so selfish?

Tommy nodded quietly, and Dream left, slamming and locking the door shut behind him.

Wilbur dashed down the halls to where he heard Tommy's cries, his heart hammering against his chest.

What had Tommy been doing here? Why was Tommy here? Had Tommy escaped Schlatt? Why did he sound so scared? Why did he call for Phil and Technoblade?

Wilbur pushed aside the questions stirring up in his head. They could wait. Tommy couldn't.

The screaming had already stopped, but Wilbur could hear Phil's shouts bounce against the walls, so Wilbur skidded to a halt in front of his cell.

Phil seemed to be cursing out Dream, which was nothing new, but his main focus seemed to be concerning Dream getting his hands *off* of someone.

He was probably shouting about Technoblade. That would be typical of Phil, to be worried about the favorite even though he wasn't even here.

Of course, Phil didn't know that.

Wilbur had only managed to get the door open when he heard Dream approach behind him.

"What are you doing?" Dream asked, sounding relaxed.

Wilbur snarled. "I'm going to find my brother." He rounded onto Dream and jabbed a finger into his chest. "I heard him shout for me, I'm here for Tommy, where is he?"

Dream frowned. "Wilbur... Tommy isn't here."

Wilbur laughed. "Funny joke, Dream, but I heard him."

Dream tilted his head. "When?"

Wilbur gaped at Dream. Behind Wilbur, he could vaguely hear Phil shouting something about Tommy, but Wilbur didn't particularly trust anything Phil was prone to say, considering that he was being held prisoner.

"When? A few minutes ago, does it matter? I heard Tommy, I need to get to him, I need to ___"

"Tommy's not here," Dream said, "Have you been sleeping lately?"

Wilbur gritted his teeth. What was Dream even playing at?

"Of course Tommy's here, I heard him," Wilbur reiterated, hoping that Dream would actually get the message this time.

"But he's not," Dream said, "Maybe you got mixed up when you heard Philza shouting? I mean, you can check the cell, but nobody's in there."

Wilbur rounded back to the cell, ready to prove to Dream that he *had* heard Tommy, that Tommy *was* nearby.

But the only person in the cell was Phil, who was still screaming things that Wilbur could barely comprehend at this point. Tears were streaming down his father's face.

Wait a moment, Phil wasn't Wilbur's father.

Dream closed the door before Wilbur could witness any more of the tears. Now it was just Wilbur and Dream alone in the hallway, Phil's shouting nothing more than white noise.

"See?" Dream said, "Tommy's not here."

Wilbur clutched his hair, trying to get a proper grip on reality. "But, I heard him. He was crying for help. I-I *heard* him."

Dream sighed. "I think I know what this is."

Wilbur gave Dream a suspicious look, but he let Dream continue.

"You're feeling guilty for what Technoblade's probably doing to Tommy now that he's escaped," Dream continued, "I understand, I sometimes think I still hear my sister, but that's a story for another time—"

"You're sister?" Wilbur asked, his voice hoarse. Wilbur hadn't even realized that Dream had a sister.

Dream sighed. “It’s a long story. She’s dead now.”

“Oh.”

If there was one thing Wilbur could understand, it was loss, especially when it came to a younger sibling. If Tommy died, Wilbur knew exactly what he would do.

He’d follow Tommy straight to hell. Like Orpheus, except Wilbur didn’t intend to return to the broken land of the living.

“Anyway, my point is that you’re probably worried about Tommy so you’re hearing things,” Dream continued, “Maybe you should get some sleep.”

Wilbur sighed, loosening his grip on his hair. Sleep... was actually probably a good idea.

“I’ll consider it,” Wilbur conceded. He let go of his hair completely and stood tall, straightening his jacket. “Sorry for that, I was hearing things.”

“Like I said, happens to the best of us.”

Wilbur could’ve *sworn* he heard Tommy, but... how could Tommy have even found his way here?

He must’ve been imagining things.

Chapter End Notes

Hello finally i can read unbeatable method when i post this chapter.

Sorry for any inaccuracies it just be like that sometimes.

Wilbur is at that point where the manipulator becomes the *manipulated*.

Dream? Be tragic while also being a muffin head? In MY fanfiction? blame interjection it's their fault. (don't worry tho dream is still terrible and will be dying before the fic is over)

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading! <3

Mistakes for Everyone

Chapter Summary

Tubbo realizes that he may have made a mistake.

Tommy is not realizing that he has made a mistake.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, child abuse, referenced self-sacrifice, captivity, chains, self-hate, sleep-deprivation, manipulation, gaslighting

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo hadn't slept that night.

After Schlatt had done his best to reassure him, Tubbo had sat in his room, drafting various plans for the day that the exchange would happen.

It would be naïve of Tubbo to think that Dream would willingly hand Tommy over, in spite of the fact that it was their arrangement. There was nothing legal about the deal. Tubbo and Dream hadn't signed anything to seal it; hell, they hadn't even shaken hands.

And even if there was any semblance of officiality to this deal, would Dream even care? It wasn't like Dream hadn't already been declared an enemy to Manberg, and it was only a matter of time before Eret followed the trend.

Then again, in the previous timeline, Dream had dethroned Eret. Dream was the most important, if not the only, key Eret's to power in the SMP, so when Dream had decided that Eret shouldn't be on the throne anymore, that was it. Eret was done, replaced with George.

But this time, Tubbo had George on his side. Or, at least, Tubbo *hoped* he had George on his side. Come to think of it, maybe Tubbo should check in on George. Maybe he had spoken to Dream in the time since Tubbo had spoken to him.

Tubbo stared at the communicator sitting at his desk, but he didn't reach for it. It was three in the morning; George was probably asleep by now.

Tubbo glanced back down at his notebook, where he was sloppily writing notes for any possible plans of attack against Dream. Even now, he had a hard time reading it (thanks a lot dyslexia), but he knew that they probably wouldn't work anyway.

Dream was just too damn smart for them.

If they went through their planned ambush at the trade, Dream would probably kill one of them then and there. And what if Dream just decided *not* to bring Tommy? Or Phil at that?

Tubbo had yet to tell Technoblade that he might be roped up in this exchange of hostages as well. He should probably do that, shouldn't he?

Sighing, Tubbo reached for his communicator, not in the mood to speak to Technoblade face to face.

Then again, if Technoblade was with Schlatt; Tubbo didn't want to give away the fact that he was basically selling his soul to Dream.

Tubbo would just ask Technoblade to come over to his office. That wasn't completely unreasonable, was it?

Tubbo grabbed his communicator, and scrolled down to Technoblade's contact information. After a small moment of hesitation, Tubbo clicked call.

Tubbo waited for a moment before the ringing stopped and Technoblade answered.

"Tubbo?" Technoblade said, sounding confused and not at all like someone who had just gotten out of bed. This was rather unsurprising, considering that Technoblade had been with the search party and had only recently gotten back, from what Tubbo could tell.

Without Tommy, Tubbo bitterly noted.

"How are you, Technoblade?" Tubbo asked, trying to keep his voice calm.

There was still a certain degree of unease that came with talking to Technoblade. It was hard to forget the way Technoblade raised his crossbow toward Tubbo's chest, the way the fireworks had mixed with the blood and the smell of burns, the way Technoblade beat Tommy bloody in the pit.

Hell, talking to Technoblade even brought uncomfortable memories of the Butcher Army, and that had been *Tubbo's* fault.

"Um.. I'm fine," Technoblade said slowly, sounding slightly suspicious, "Is there a reason you're calling me right now instead of, I don't know, sleeping?"

"I'm seventeen," Tubbo said dryly, "Do you really expect me to maintain a proper sleep-schedule?"

"Fair," Technoblade said instantly, "But you still haven't answered my question. Why are you calling me at this hour?"

Tubbo sighed, staring down at his poorly written notes. "I, um, can I talk to you for a moment? Alone?"

There was a small pause over the line.

“I’m not going to lie kid, that sounds very ominous,” he said, “You’re not trying to like, kill me or anything like that? Because I’d probably kill you first but that’s really not the point.”

Tubbo squawked in surprise. “I’m not going to kill you!” he exclaimed, “I just wanted to talk about something... um, important.”

“Important.”

Tubbo nodded. “Yep.”

Tubbo heard a loud sigh. “Alright,” Technoblade said, “I’m coming. Where are you at?”

“I’m in my office,” Tubbo said, “It’s, uh, the one near the map room.”

“Yeah, I don’t know where that is,” Techno said, “I’ll find it, though; I’ll see you in a few minutes.”

Technoblade hung up, and Tubbo groaned, planting his forehead against his desk. His eyes felt a bit like they were trying to forcibly shut themselves, but they had clearly not met the power of Tubbo and his ability to stay awake even in the face of forty-eight hours without sleep.

He remembered when Ranboo would try to make him go to sleep, even resorting to methods such as draping a fluffy blanket over Tubbo while he was working at his desk.

Tubbo missed Ranboo. He wasn’t due to arrive at the SMP for at least a month, however.

Hopefully this time, Ranboo would arrive to a far more peaceful place than the last time around. Tubbo wasn’t too optimistic at this point, though.

Despite the fact that Technoblade had no idea where Tubbo’s office was, he reached Tubbo fairly quickly, within five minutes at least. Or maybe Tubbo dozed off without noticing.

Regardless of what happened, Technoblade opened the door rather loudly, and Tubbo sat up instantly, feeling a bit like a student who had been caught asleep during classes.

Tubbo tried not to stare at Technoblade’s missing arm and hair, but he looked so *strange* without them. It was almost as if two integral parts of Technoblade had been stripped away.

Still, Technoblade made up for his missing parts by standing taller than ever, somehow looking even more intimidating than before.

“Hello,” Tubbo said tiredly, yawning, “Can you, um, close the door behind you?”

Technoblade nodded, turning around and shutting the door with his one arm. Tubbo tried *really hard* not to stare. It wasn’t any his business.

“So,” Technoblade said with an air of faux casualness, as he stood in the corner of the room, keeping his back facing the wall. He lifted his arm across his chest before letting it hang limply down at his side with a scowl. “For what do I owe this pleasure?”

“I wanted to talk to you,” Tubbo said, swallowing down the lump of fear that had rose in his throat. This wasn’t even the same Technoblade who had hurt him; it would be fine. “I... um... may have done something foolish.”

Technoblade sighed, massaging his temple. “Fantastic,” he muttered, “You do realize that I’ve been here for like six hours, right? Can’t you dump this on Mr. President or something?”

Tubbo jumped to his feet, making a slicing motion repeatedly across his throat. “You cannot tell Schlatt about this,” he said frantically, “He would *kill* me if he knew.”

Technoblade’s face darkened. “Literally or—”

God, this place was so screwed up.

“Figuratively,” Tubbo sighed in exasperation, “it was figurative.”

Technoblade nodded, looking slightly calmer. “Good, because I’ve been hearing about these charges for child abuse, and I wanted to make sure you didn’t feel like your life was ind anger and all—”

Wait. What?

Tubbo straightened, giving Technoblade a startled look. “Pardon?”

Technoblade raised his eyebrows. “What? You think I condone the mistreatment of minors? It’s this sort of thing that—”

“No, no, no,” Tubbo interrupted yet again, “Back up. When did you hear about *child abuse*?”

Technoblade rolled his eyes. “Well, it’s kind of this place’s thing, apparently, but if you really must know, I saw it on the newspaper.”

Tubbo groaned, putting his head in his hands. The *newspapers*. He had forgotten about them. God, they were probably milking Tubbo’s lack of a comment for all that it was worth; he should’ve denied it, now people were going to call for Schlatt’s removal from office and—

“Kid, are you okay?” Technoblade asked, interrupting Tubbo from his thoughts, “You look a bit like you’re going to explode.”

Tubbo let out a hysterical giggle. “You think?” he asked, “I just ruined everything for everyone, even *myself*, even *you*, in the span of a few hours!”

Technoblade sighed. “I somehow doubt that.”

“Oh yeah?” Tubbo demanded, “Over the span of a day, I got Tommy angry enough to run away to Dream, made the press more suspicious of Schlatt’s actions, and made a deal with

Dream to get Tommy back. I'd say that's pretty bad!"

Technoblade frowned. "You *what?*"

Tubbo flinched, but he didn't back down. "I made a deal with Dream," he said shortly, "If he gives Tommy back, I-I—"

Technoblade strode across the room, resting his hand against the desk and looking Tubbo straight into the eyes. Tubbo tried not to shrink away from the intensity of his look.

"Tubbo," he said seriously, "What did you do?"

Tubbo swallowed. "I promised him my absolute loyalty," Tubbo whispered.

Technoblade stared at Tubbo in shock. "You did *what?*"

Tubbo pushed back the tears that threatened to flow down from his eyes. Tubbo was stronger than that.

"I don't know! Yes, I suppose!" Tubbo exclaimed, unable to keep the panic out of his voice, "Dream called me, and I didn't know what to do, I just wanted Tommy back!"

"You really think Tommy's going to sit still while you're working for *Dream?*" Technoblade ran his fingers through his now short hair. "Don't you know what Dream's probably going to ask you to do?"

"I have a pretty good clue," Tubbo replied shortly, "But don't you want Tommy back?"

Technoblade froze. "...you matter too, kid."

The hesitation was answer enough. If Technoblade could switch Tubbo out for Tommy at that very moment, he would've. Tubbo understood that. He would want that too. He *did* want that.

Tubbo straightened, inhaling deeply through his nose. "Tommy has sacrificed time and time again for others," he said, "It's only fair that I do so in return."

Technoblade laughed shakily. "Tubbo, are you even hearing yourself?"

"Are you?" Tubbo demanded, "Why are you fighting me on this? I thought you wanted Tommy back? I thought you would be glad yet another government official would be out of the running!"

Technoblade flinched, and he stretched out his hand like he was reaching for something out of his inventory. Tubbo instinctively stepped away, only serving to knock his chair over backwards with a loud clatter against the wooden floors.

Technoblade froze before slumping, letting his hand fall back to his side.

"First of all," Technoblade said slowly, "If you promise your absolute loyalty, there is no guarantee that Dream won't send you right back here to *actually* mess things up."

Tubbo tried to ignore the clamminess of his skin. It wasn't a particularly surprising thought; as a matter of fact, Tubbo even expected it. Still, the thought of being a spy for *Dream* made him sick to his stomach.

"Second of all," Technoblade continued, "You're a good kid, Tubbo. So don't you dare tell me that you haven't sacrificed anything."

Tubbo stared at Technoblade in confusion. "But—"

Technoblade shook his head quickly. "Nope," Technoblade said, "I understand that you kids have been bred by war, and are under the impression that if you aren't actively sacrificing your lives at every single waking moment, you're doing something wrong."

Tubbo said nothing, looking back down at his desk. It wasn't *exactly* like that, per say, but there was a certain degree of obligation that you had to make sacrifices. Not necessarily your life, but perhaps your livelihood, or your safety, or even your friends.

Tubbo didn't particularly like thinking about that, though. It reminded him of what he did to Tommy.

"I've already hurt Tommy," Tubbo said quietly, "Why can't I help him?"

"You really think that giving your free will for Dream to play with as he pleases won't hurt Tommy?" Technoblade asked, "Because he's going to be *devastated*."

Tubbo's hurt gave way to frustration. It was all well and good for Technoblade to say these things now; Technoblade wasn't *there*. Technoblade hadn't been forced to make the hard decisions in a split second.

"Well, then what did you want me to do?" Tubbo demanded, "I was working with the cards Dream gave me, and that's all there was to it. You can't blame me for wanting to save Tommy."

Technoblade sighed. "I'm not blaming you," he said, "I'm just worried, alright? Let's make a deal, okay? You get some sleep, and I'll think of ways that we can work around this deal. Did you do anything binding?"

Tubbo shook his head.

Technoblade nodded. "Well then, that gives us room to just break it if the opportunity arises. I'll think on it, alright? You need sleep."

Tubbo shut his eyes. "There's one more thing."

"And what's that?"

"If you join me, we can get Philza back."

There was an abrupt silence, and Tubbo peaked his eyes open.

Technoblade was looking past Tubbo, his eyes slightly wide. After a few moments, however, he sighed and lightly slapped the table. “Get some sleep,” he said for the third time, “I’ll figure out another way.”

As soon as Technoblade was gone, Tubbo tiredly picked his chair back up off the floor and sat down in it. Then, with a final yawn, he fell asleep with his face pressed up against the surface of his desk.

Tommy shivered in the corner of the tiny room Dream had shoved him back into, staring at the locked door. His nose throbbed, but it had at least stopped bleeding, so Tommy considered that a small victory, at the very least.

Dream would come back soon. Dream would be back to punish him.

Tommy had screwed up. He shouldn’t have tried to leave. *He had just wanted to escape, he had just wanted freedom, he just wanted to save Techno and Phil—*

No. Tommy shouldn’t have tried to leave. It was selfish. Dream was only doing what was best for him; nobody else cared about Tommy anyway.

Technoblade had cared, Tubbo had cared—

Technoblade didn’t even have an arm anymore. Wilbur cut it off because of *Tommy*. Technoblade wouldn’t want anything to do with Tommy after that. And Tubbo had *lied* to him. Tubbo clearly didn’t care as much as he said if he was going to hide Techno’s whereabouts. Didn’t Tubbo know how desperate Tommy had been to save him?

Dream didn’t care about him either; Dream just wanted him as a pretty little toy; Tommy had to get away—

Get away to where? Manberg where everyone hated him? To Wilbur where Tommy wouldn’t even be a *toy*, instead being a doll for Wilbur to hold close? Tommy literally had nowhere to go.

Prime, that sounded like something Wilbur would say.

Tommy had his knees to his chest, and he clenched his fists around the dirty denim of his jeans. He didn’t want to think about Wilbur. Because if he thought about Wilbur, he’d think about how he smiled even while teasing him, and then he’d think of how Wilbur smiled a far more broken smile when he died, and then Tommy would think about how Ghostbur would wear both of those smiles and look so, so wrong.

Tears pricked at the corners of Tommy’s eyes, and he pressed his palm against them, trying to stop himself from bursting into tears. Dream would be coming in at any minute; he couldn’t afford to look weak.

Even if the walls felt like they were suddenly closing in on Tommy, trying to swallow him whole as he tried not to hyperventilate, and—

The door clanged loudly open, and Tommy let out a startled yelp, banging the back of his head against the wall. With a small moan, Tommy looked up at Dream.

Dream closed the door silently behind him, not once looking at Tommy as he crossed the cramped room. It wasn't until Dream sat down on Tommy's bed that Dream looked up at Tommy.

Tommy froze, not daring to breathe.

There was a long moment of silence, each waiting for the other to take their opportunity to speak. As every second ticked by, Tommy felt like his every cell was buzzing in anticipation, waiting for Dream to say something, to do something.

Instead, Dream just sat there; his mask blankly staring at Tommy as dread roiled in Tommy's chest.

Eventually, Tommy couldn't take it anymore. He had to say something. He had to break this horrifying silence.

"I'm—"

Dream sighed loudly, interrupting Tommy instantly. "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy," Dream said, sounding so disappointed, like an exasperated parent who had said this a thousand times before, "What were you *thinking*?"

He wanted to escape.

"I was just-I just—" Tommy fumbled, trying to find the words.

"Were you trying to *leave*?" Dream demanded, sounding more frustrated, "Was that what you were trying to do, Tommy?"

"No!" Tommy squeaked out, "No, no, I wouldn't—"

"Don't lie to me," Dream said coldly, standing up, "After everything I've done for you..." Dream laughed. "I *trusted* you, Tommy! I didn't chain you, I gave you a *bed*... and you just throw all of that away."

Guilt pulsed against Tommy's chest, and he curled deeper in on himself. "I'm sorry," he whispered, "I'm sorry—"

Dream let out another laugh. "Sorry isn't good enough, Toms."

Tommy froze, memories of Logstedshire going in one explosion flashing across his vision. His ears were ringing, and Tommy began shaking his head desperately, scrambling toward Dream.

"Please," Tommy begged, "Please, please, I'm sorry, *please*—"

Dream pulled out some chains out of his inventory, and Tommy flinched at the way the links loudly clattered against each other.

“I think this works much better than rope, don’t you?” Dream asked, tilting his head at Tommy.

Tommy scrambled back, pressing his body against the walls, trying not to shudder at the way he felt so very cramped, so very *trapped*—

Dream grabbed him tightly by the wrist, and Tommy let out a shocked cry.

“Quiet,” Dream said sharply, painfully digging his nails into Tommy’s skin, “Or I’ll be forced to gag you too.”

Tommy shut his mouth tightly. The last thing he wanted to be was gagged. He wanted control over his voice. He wanted to be able to speak.

“I didn’t want to do this,” Dream said quietly as he clamped the tight shackles around Tommy’s wrists, “But if you’re going to try to run away like this, I have no choice. I’m only trying to keep you safe.”

This was a lie. Dream had only been trying to protect him.

Hot shame curled around Tommy’s stomach. Why had he tried to run away? Why would he go and betray Dream like that? Dream hadn’t even tried to restrain him before.

Selfish.

Tears slowly started slipping down Tommy’s face as Dream used a small key to lock the shackles with a damning click.

Dream sighed, cupping Tommy’s cheek and gently wiping away the tears with his thumb. Tommy leaned into the touch.

“I didn’t want to do it.”

“I know,” Tommy whispered.

“But you know why I had to.”

Tommy swallowed. “Yes.”

“Good.”

Chapter End Notes

Hello pals.

I hope you are having a lovely day.

Have a chapter of this fic.

Thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and i hope you enjoyed. <3

Here, Have Some Blue

Chapter Summary

Technoblade finds out secrets.

Tommy sees Ghostbur.

Chapter Notes

tw: hallucinations, ptsd, paranoia, starvation, isolation, child abuse, stockholm syndrome, arguments,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade left Tubbo's office, ready to return to the bedroom Schlatt's people had provided for him and try to work out a proper plan.

*PHIL PHIL PHIL PIHL PHIL. **WE MUST RESCUE DADZA. GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DADZA. THESE ARE NOT VERY PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS. LIBERTY OF DADZA. NO NO NO, I HAVE A BETTER IDEA. LET'S JUST KILL THE GREEN FLORIDA MAN. BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD, BLOOD...***

Techno really wished that he could just do what Chat suggested and kill Dream. It would probably solve half of their problems. Or if Wilbur would at least come to his senses and realize that Tommy wasn't *his* to keep.

Actually, come to think of it, Wilbur might be able to give them a hint or two concerning Tommy's location. Unless, of course, Dream hadn't actually *told* Wilbur that he had Tommy, which, knowing Dream, wasn't actually all that unlikely.

Well, there was only one way to find out.

Technoblade entered his bedroom, carefully walking around the still dirty dog, Max, who was sleeping on the floor. He grabbed his new communicator (courtesy of Sam, who hadn't finished his arm yet) and called Wilbur.

*ALRIGHT EVERYBODY PLACE YOUR BETS NOW. **WILL WILBUR REPLY? WILL HE KNOW THAT TOMMY'S GONE? WILL HE DO ANYTHING AT ALL? I BET HE WILL REPLY AND HE WILL KNOW AND HE WILL BE ANNOYING ABOUT IT. LOL I BET YOU'RE WRONG. WHOEVER WINS GETS CHOCOLATE.***

Techno put his still ringing communicator on speaker-mode and put it down on his bedside table. Now that his hand was free, he quickly turned the lamp on, illuminating the once dark room.

The knots in Techno's chest loosened slightly, and he collapsed on top of his bed, relaxing in the softness.

*TWO WORDS: THERAPY. **TECHNOBLADE GETS THERAPY CHALLENGE 2020.** THERE WILL COME A DAY WHEN TECHNOBLADE WILL GET THERAPY. **BUT IT'S NOT THIS DAY.***

"Who is this?"

Techno jolted when the ringing in his communicator stopped, and Wilbur's harried voice emerged from the speaker.

"Hey, Wil," Techno said, trying to keep his voice steady, "It's me."

"*Technoblade?*" Wilbur demanded, his voice raising in volume.

Technoblade flinched, but he quickly resumed wearing a passive expression. Nobody was there to see it, but it still made Technoblade feel like he still had some semblance of control.

Besides, there was no reason for Technoblade to flinch away in any case. Wilbur wasn't here. Wilbur couldn't hurt a hair on Technoblade's head even if Technoblade were weak enough to let him, which, of course, he wasn't.

*ALAS, ALL WE WANT FOR CHRISTMAS IS TECHNOBLADE TO GET THERAPY. **IT'S NOT EVEN HOLOWEEN.** Even in the future it was a few days after Christmas. **WHAT CRUEL WORLD IS THIS???***

"Yep," Techno said dully in reply to Wilbur, "That's me."

"What are you doing to Tommy?" Wilbur growled instantly, and Technoblade flinched again.

*WELL THAT ANSWERS THAT QUESTION. **WILBUR SOOT MOST CERTAINLY DOES NOT KNOW.** OH WILBUR DO WE HAVE NEWS FOR YOU.*

Technoblade sat up quickly. "Wil, we don't have Tommy," he said.

There was a small pause.

"What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

Wilbur's voice was still angry, but it was a quivering type of anger to his voice. That unsure anger that Techno came to expect from Wilbur whenever he was caught off guard.

*BOY DO WE HAVE NEWS FOR YOU. **MAYBE YOU CAN RESCUE TOMMY WHILE YOU'RE AT IT.** UM NO HE'S CREEPY? **UM YES, HE AT LEAST THINKS HE CARES?***

“Tommy ran away to Dream,” Techno said shortly, trying to keep the growling anger away from his own voice, “He’s not *here*. He’s with you.”

“No.” Wilbur’s voice was softer now, almost as if he were uttering an unspeakable truth. “He’s not—he’s not—he’s with *you*!”

Techno jumped to his feet, slamming his fist against the wall angrily. He grimaced at the dent he made in the plywood.

“He’s not with us Wilbur!” Techno shouted, “Dream has him, we’ve been telling you time and time again to stop trusting him, so why are you?!”

“I’m not *trusting* him!” Wilbur shouted back, and Technoblade couldn’t help but to remember back when they shouted at each other like this when they were children, “I’m just using him for now!”

LOL STOP LYING TO YOURSELF. WHY YOU LYING? WHY YOU LYING? CAN SOMEBODY PLEASE BEAT SOME SENSE INTO HIS HEAD?

“Oh yeah?” Techno demanded, “There wasn’t *one* moment that might have hinted to you that Tommy was with you? Not one? Not even Dream leaving at a strange time and returning with no explanation?”

Wilbur was laughing now, and Techno resisted the overwhelming urge to grab the communicator and smash it against the wall and get Wilbur to *shut up with that laugh*.

“I can’t—I—”

And Wilbur hung up, leaving Techno alone in the silence.

For a moment, Techno just stood there, staring at his communicator, now sitting silently on the bed-side table like nothing had ever happened.

Max, who had been sleeping when Techno first came in, must have woken up with all the shouting, because he had walked up to Techno and sat down in front of him, staring up at Techno expectantly.

MAX. OUR BELOVED. WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BOY. WHO’S A BEAUTIFUL HOUND? YOU ARE, YES YOU ARE. MAX YOU REALLY ARE THE ONLY DOG EVER.

With a sigh, Techno sat down in front of the dog, scratching the dirty creature behind the ears. He really ought to give him a bath soon.

Max wagged his tail eagerly at the scratches, and Technoblade wished he had both arms so that he could give Max the most pets as possible.

He ignored the strange sensation in his chest at the thought of his still missing arm.

TECHNOSOFT? TECHNO LIKES PETTING DOGS. YOU SHOULD COO AT THE DOG. I WISH I HAD A CAMERA WE COULD HAVE SO MUCH BLACKMAIL RIGHT NOW.

WE CAN KEEP IT IN OUR HEARTS FOREVER.

Techno rolled his eyes, moving his hand down to pet the fur on Max's neck, trying not to press down the warmth in his chest when Max leaned into the touch. The feel of the fur was satisfying, but Techno did not care what the dog thought.

He didn't.

AWWWW TECHNO IS SOFFTTTT. IS THE DOG OUR THERAPY?? OH PLEASE THAT WOULD BE A MIRACLE.

Techno continued sinking his fingers deeper into the dog's incredible amounts of fur, and his fingers felt a collar underneath it all. That made sense, Techno supposed. It wasn't like Techno to own a dog and then not put a collar on it.

Still, it was strange. In most cases of time travel, the consciousness went into the original body, which meant that nothing traveled back with them. Why did this dog still have his collar?

OOOOO MYSTERIES. DID SOMEBODY SAY MYSTERIES. THE CABINET OF MYSTERIES! IT IS I, SHERLOCK HOLMES, HERE TO SOLVE THE MYSTERY. I THINK YOU MEAN NANCY DREW. EW, EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT HERMIONE GRANGER IS THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN SOLVE MYSTERIES—

The Chat continued their debate on who could solve mysteries, and Techno did some *actual* work, feeling around for the latch of the collar and unlatching it with a certain degree of difficulty.

The collar fell to the ground with a jingling clatter, and Techno noticed a tightly folded piece of paper floating to the ground with it.

PAPER. PAPER. PAPER IS MADE BY TREES. IT FLOATS LIKE A FEATHER. IF I ATE PAPER, WOULD I DIE? THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT. EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT

What the heck was wrong with the voices inside his head?

WE ASK OURSELVES THIS QUESTION EVERY DAY. WE ARE WHO WE ARE TECHNOBLADE. YEAH, DON'T JUDGE JERKFACE. MUFFINHEAD. SON OF A FISCH.

Techno decided *not* to take any of Chat's advice and instead peeled the piece of paper off of the wood floor, grabbing the edge of the paper and peeling it open.

It was a letter, of some kind.

OOOOH, LETTER. EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT. SECRETS MYSTERIES ANSWERS. WHAT IS GOING ON? EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT, EAT

Technoblade peered down at the contents of the letter, struggling to read the carefully printed words in the dim lighting.

Hey Technoblade,

Um, this is Karl. You might have seen me around, although I'm not around... all that much. I'm often doing other things, which is kind of the whole reason of this letter, so I'm not sure why I'm beating around the bush. Habit, I guess.

I'm a time traveler. And if my assumption is correct, which I'm only eighty-percent-sure it is, your voices are too. Well, so are Tommy, Tubbo, and Dream, but Max seemed to be the most disciplined and like the only pet left on this server, so it wasn't that hard to put a spell on him to make it so that he could track you down basically anywhere. A bit like the lodestone compasses, but a little more complicated.

Anyway, this message was like really important, so I trusted Max to actually successfully deliver it.

Like I said, I'm a time traveler, and something's wrong with the Inbetween, but don't worry about that. Basically, I can't come to you because there's something wrong with my ability, and somehow the issues with the Inbetween caused you guys to time travel. Like a glitch or something. So, it's kind of up to you guys to deal with something while you're here.

I'm trusting that Chat or everyone else has filled you in on the stuff that they know about, so I'm not going to bother explaining everything about that in this letter.

What Chat probably DOESN'T know is that there's this egg that's going to start corrupting everything. Hopefully too much time hasn't passed when you get this, so I'd recommend going to these coordinates and just burning it with some soul fire or figuring out how to destroy it with any means as soon as possible. (I have a list of the things you're going to want to bring so that the Egg doesn't corrupt you too.)

Anyway, sorry about this situation. I'd come myself, but the Inbetween won't let me back, and I'm working on it.

-Karl Jacobs

Technoblade stared at the letter in shock.

What the actual hell.

Tommy wasn't sure how long he was left alone.

He knew it had to be at least hours. Maybe even days.

Dream hadn't come back. He hadn't brought food. He hadn't lengthened the chains so that Tommy could at least manage to climb into the bed.

But Tommy was stuck on the ground, leaning uncomfortably against the bedpost, his stomach feeling like it was trying to eat his own insides as he stared dully at the dark walls.

Dream would come back. He would.

This was what Tommy deserved for trying to escape like this. Tommy should have appreciated Dream's kindness before he betrayed him. Why had Tommy betrayed him anyway? Dream had given him a bed, and care, and food, and protection...

But Dream was still protecting him. Dream was keeping Tommy safe from people like Schlatt and Wilbur—

The horrible gnawing sensation in his stomach mixed with a horrible ache in Tommy's chest. He missed Wilbur. He missed how Wilbur used to be.

Wilbur wasn't like that anymore. He said he cared, but did he really? Or was it all just a lie?

But if Wilbur's words were a lie, were Dream's words all a lie too?

Staring at the wall, sleep deprived and starved, Tommy wasn't sure if he cared anymore.

Tommy only wanted Dream to come back.

If Tommy had enough water to cry, he would have. Instead, he just let out a tired sob, fighting against the drooping of his eyelids. If he fell asleep, Tommy would be thrust into the terrifying nightmares, and Tommy didn't want that.

Besides, it was hard to rest well with his back uncomfortably wedged into the corner of his leg and hunger trying to eat him alive.

So, he stayed awake, just waiting for the moment when Dream would come back.

He was so alone.

"Tommy?"

An echoing filled Tommy's ears, and Tommy glanced up to see the familiar form of Ghostbur floating toward him, a frown on his face.

Tommy probably should have been more concerned that the ghost of his brother who wasn't dead was coming toward him, but the only thought he could muster was a horrible *longing*.

Tommy weakly reached his fingers out toward Ghostbur, even though he knew the ghost wouldn't be able to touch him no matter what.

“Tommy?” Ghostbur said again, this time much closer to Tommy. His face was still pulled into a frown.

“Hi Ghostbur,” Tommy slurred, his eyelids heavy, “Are you from the future too?”

Ghostbur smiled. “Of course not, silly! I don’t think it would be possible for me to be from the future.”

Tommy frowned blearily at him. “Then how...?”

Ghostbur frowned. “I heard you were sad, so I brought some blue,” he said, putting some of the sticky substance in Tommy’s hand. Tommy watched as the clear stuff became such a deep blue that it might as well be black.

“Oh dear,” Ghostbur said quietly, “You are very sad, aren’t you, Tommy?”

Tommy sighed, his stomach hurting all the more. “Yeah,” he admitted, “I think I am.”

He missed Dream. He wished he would come back. Ghostbur was fine, but he wasn’t *real*. Not like other people. Ghostbur couldn’t touch him, or feed him, or do anything truly useful.

Ghostbur sighed. “Do I make you sad?” he asked, “Because you look extra sad now.”

Tommy didn’t have much energy to say anything. He was so *tired*, and he was so *hungry*, and he just wanted someone to hold him, as childish as that might sound. He missed Cozy Nights, when he could curl up in Wilbur’s arms and pretend that nothing was the matter anymore.

A tear that Tommy wasn’t even aware he still possessed in his body slipped down his cheek, and Ghostbur made a pained sound at the sight.

“I can leave now,” his echoing said, giving Tommy a sad smile, “I just, I don’t like seeing you alone.”

“It’s okay, big man,” Tommy whispered, his voice hoarse, “Dream will be back soon.”

Ghostbur frowned again, and he twisted his hands together in a stressed motion. “Isn’t... isn’t Dream the one that hurt you?” he asked, blue tears running down his face, “Didn’t he... ruin your beach party? Wasn’t he just watching you?”

No. Dream was just trying to protect him. Tommy had screwed up; Dream was the only one —

Wasn’t he just watching you?

Great. Now Tommy’s head hurt along with his stomach.

“I—” A lump rose in Tommy’s throat, and he struggled to continued, “I don’t know.”

Ghostbur smiled again. “That’s okay!” he said cheerfully, “I hope you feel better soon.”

Tommy blinked, and Ghostbur was gone.

Chapter End Notes

In case you didn't realize, Ghostbur was a hallucination.

And look I explained the time travel i was going to be perfectly fine with leaving a mystery for eternity, but now this has opened up for a new fic so yay i guess.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed, please be nice in the comments, and thank you for reading! <3

Second Strike

Chapter Summary

Wilbur gets mad and gets sad and does a thing.

Phil does NOT do a thing.

Chapter Notes

tw: panic attacks, suicide attempt, suicidal thoughts, non-graphic torture, heavily implied amputation, only a tiny amount of blood, pleading, crying, Dream, Wilbur, mental instability, paranoia, betrayal sort of, death, ptsd, grief

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur was laughing.

He paced around his bedroom, tugging at his hair, trying to process what the hell was going on with his goddamn life. Why couldn't anything be simple? Why couldn't things go back to the way they were? Why did everyone have to scramble all the thoughts in his head so repeatedly?

"Dream hurt and emotionally manipulated Tommy to the point that Tommy became suicidal." "He wants me!" "Dream has him, we've been telling you time and time again to stop trusting him, so why are you?!"

Dream was helping him. Dream wouldn't lie.

And yet...

"There wasn't one moment that might have hinted to you that Tommy was with you? Not one? Not even Dream leaving at a strange time and returning with no explanation?" "WILBUR!"

Tommy's panicked scream still rang over and over again in Wilbur's head, haunting him. Dream had said he was just imagining things, which wasn't unsurprising, but if what Techno said was true...

Wilbur gnashed his teeth together, trying to pull himself together. Techno was lying to him; he was trying to pull him off course; Techno didn't give a *crap*—

"I love you, Wilbur."

Wilbur stopped short, the memory of Techno dying in his arms now branded into his mind. He had been in so much pain, why would he...

No. No, Wilbur wasn't going to think about it as he forced himself to let go of his hair and stuff his hands into his pockets instead. Techno didn't love him; he didn't—

His fingers brushed against cold metal in his pocket, and Wilbur stopped short, pulling out the mysterious object.

Oh. It was that compass-locket that had fallen from Techno's inventory after Wilbur... after Wilbur killed him.

Wilbur very nearly threw the thing against the stone walls in frustration, desperate to see something break and calm the raging thoughts inside his head. Instead, he flicked the thing open, looking at the family photograph inside.

"He doesn't love me," Wilbur whispered.

"I love you, Wilbur."

Wilbur growled, shutting the locket closed with a loud snap. He didn't want to think about this; he didn't *want to think about this*.

Why couldn't things be simple again? Why did everything always have to flip on its goddamn head? Why couldn't Wilbur live in a world where Techno and Phil didn't pretend to care about him, and Tommy was with him?

"Dream has him, we've been telling you time and time again to stop trusting him, so why are you?!"

Why would Dream want Tommy in the first place? There's no reason Dream would want Tommy; he's just a child; Dream couldn't benefit from him; Dream was *on* Wilbur's side; there was no reason—

Wilbur was interrupted by a chime on his communicator, and Wilbur quickly pulled it out and stared at the screen.

It was a message from Technoblade.

Technoblade: Oh, if you manage to steal one of Manberg's newspapers, maybe you'll actually believe me.

The newspapers? When was the last time Wilbur had even managed to get his hands on one of those? A while, he knew. Dream had said Manberg was on high alert for Wilbur, and Wilbur didn't exactly doubt it considering how eager Schlatt was to kill both him and Tommy even at the start of the exile.

But... maybe Wilbur should be better informed. Not to mention that Technoblade seemed to believe that the newspapers would have some sort of hint about Tommy's whereabouts. But

didn't Technoblade know that newspapers manipulated a narrative to their own pleasure? Schlatt wouldn't exactly like the public knowing that Tommy was getting tortured—

“WILBUR!”

Wilbur tugged at his hair again, trying to rid his mind of Tommy's echoing screams. Tommy wasn't here; Wilbur was just imagining things; even Dream said—

Dream said.

Wilbur scowled. Since when did he care about what Dream said? Dream didn't control him.

Who was lying? Technoblade? Dream? Both?

Wilbur didn't know who to believe, who to trust. But then again, did he ever?

You know what? Who cared that Manberg was on high-alert for Wilbur? Wilbur was going to get his hands on one of those goddamn newspapers, and decide for himself who was most likely to be lying.

Wilbur reached Manberg in a few hours, and it was pretty easy to remain undetected. This was why there should still be walls. Someone would notice if an invisible person was digging through a wall. Instead, Wilbur could just walk in and nobody noticed a *thing*.

The sun had yet to peek over the horizon, but it was nearing winter. The days were only getting shorter and shorter; the sun having less time to burn up the sky with its light.

Sometimes, Wilbur wondered if the sun would decide to stop burning, leaving the world to be completely shrouded in darkness.

But that was hardly something Wilbur should be concerned about when he was literally sneaking into enemy territory, so Wilbur quickly walked through the streets, dodging the citizens that were coming to and back from their jobs, even at this early hour.

Wilbur walked past a pet store, and the bunch of puppies that were sitting in its windows started yapping loudly as he passed. He flinched at the noise, pausing a moment to identify that the source was indeed just the puppies.

With a sigh, Wilbur turned around. He needed to focus. This invisibility potion wasn't going to last forever.

That's when he spotted it. A newspaper stand was sitting right across the street, and a few people were standing near it, reading the pages like their eyes were literally glued to the page.

Finally.

Wilbur hurried across the street, dodging pedestrians, and he quickly snatched a newspaper from the stand, hoping nobody would notice.

Nobody did.

Good.

Wilbur wanted nothing more than to read it now, but he knew a floating newspaper would give away his position rather quickly.

So, Wilbur impatiently made his way out of Manberg, the newspaper in his inventory practically haunting him every step of the way. To make matters even better, Wilbur knew that Schlatt had scouts in the area, so Wilbur really couldn't read until he was safely settled in his and Dream's base.

Wonderful.

When Wilbur finally, *finally* reached their base, he quickly leaned against the cold stone wall and pulled the newspaper out of his inventory, opening the folded paper up with a loud rustle.

J'Schlatt Accused of Abuse of Staff

Wilbur felt a smile begin to worm his way onto his face. Well, it was about time people finally started calling Schlatt out for his crap.

Wilbur glanced down at the photograph underneath the title, expecting to see a picture of Schlatt looking particularly menacing or something similar. And while there was indeed a small photo of Schlatt, there was also a larger, blurrier photo of two people looking a bit like they were arguing.

Wilbur glanced down at the caption.

Founding Fathers Secretary Underscore and TommyInnit in an intense argument over Schlatt's treatment of them.

What.

Wilbur's hands were shaking, causing the newspaper to rustle all the louder. He tried to hold it steady, peering more closely at the blurry photograph.

Oh god. That was Tommy, wasn't it?

Why was Tommy out and about? Why hadn't anyone tried to grab him? Why did Schlatt let this newspaper get distributed?

Wilbur quickly scanned the contents of the article, allowing his confusion to grow and grow by the minute. "*Once-emigrant TommyInnit...*" "*...after he was allowed to return from Pogtopia...*"

After he was allowed to return?

Was... was Tommy not in chains? Was Tommy not wasting away in a prison cell?

But if that was true, why hadn't Tommy come back for him? Tommy said he'd never leave; why didn't he come back? Why did Dream lie? Was Dream even lying? Was the newspaper

lying? But where would they have gotten the photo?

Wilbur was clenching onto the paper so tightly that it was crumpling in his hands, making the picture of Tommy all the harder to make out. His head was pounding uncomfortably against his skull. Nothing made sense anymore; why didn't anything make sense anymore?

"Dream hurt and emotionally manipulated Tommy to the point that Tommy became suicidal."
"He wants me!" "Dream has him, we've been telling you time and time again to stop trusting him, so why are you?!"

Wilbur was vaguely aware that he was giggling again. Dream... Dream had been lying to him. Had Dream ever been on his side? Was Dream just another one of the traitors, only pretending to care?

He had expected this; he had been prepared for this. *So why did it hurt so badly?*

Dream had killed Tommy. Dream had killed Tommy *twice*. Why would Wilbur have expected help from him? How could Wilbur have been so naïve to think that he had Dream under his thumb?

"Wilbur?"

Wilbur snapped his head up to see Dream leaning against the wall, his arms crossed, his mask staring at Wilbur with this creepy intensity.

Wilbur wanted to snarl at the man. Wilbur wanted to pounce at him like a wolf coming for his prey.

But Wilbur knew Dream. He had fought in a war with Dream. So no matter how incredibly furious Wilbur was at the man, no matter how much Wilbur wanted to tear him *limb from limb*, Wilbur knew that there was no way he was going to beat him in a fight head on.

"Yes?" Wilbur asked, his voice strained.

Dream tilted his head, walking forward. "What you got there?"

Dream's voice was oh so innocent, oh so unassuming, as though he was only curious about the newspaper in Wilbur's hand.

Wilbur crumpled up the newspaper and threw it across the room. "Nothing," he muttered, "It doesn't matter."

Dream looked over at the spot the newspaper landed, humming slightly. "Been reading the news?"

"Does it matter?" Wilbur demanded.

Dream shrugged. "Well, I'd hate to see you fill your head with lies."

Wilbur rolled his eyes. “I’m not stupid,” he said, pushing himself off of the wall and walking across the room to pick up the crumpled-up ball, “I just wanted to see what Schlatt was up to.”

Dream let out a disbelieving laugh, making Wilbur wince. “You couldn’t have just asked me? I have my sources, you know.”

Wilbur clenched his hands into fists, crushing the paper even more than it already had been. “I know, I know!” he shouted. Wilbur took a deep breath. “I just... it’s so *hard*, sometimes, to make out all these thoughts in my head, and I don’t know who to trust, and everything is this dissonant symphony full of strings out of tune, and I just needed to *get rid of it*.”

Wilbur was breathing heavily now, and he felt a headache begin to form.

Dream sighed, stopping a few feet in front of Wilbur. “We’re going to find him, Wilbur,” he said comfortingly, “And then you can focus back on razing Manberg to the ground.”

Wilbur swallowed, hugging himself slightly. “Yeah?”

Dream nodded. “I’m sure of it.”

Wilbur sighed, running his fingers through his hair. “I just... I miss him. It’s all so cold, Dream.”

Dream took another step forward, and Wilbur felt an alarming rush of warmth as he placed a hand on Wilbur’s shoulder.

“We’ll save him,” Dream said, “You’re a smart man.”

Wilbur took a deep breath and straightened with a single nod, moving his hand from his hair to massaging his forehead.

“You’re right,” Wilbur said. His tone darkened. “I am.”

And as Wilbur moved to lower his hand completely to his side, he pulled his sword out of his inventory and stabbed Dream straight through the abdomen in one clean motion.

As Wilbur yanked his weapon out of Dream’s stomach, Dream let out a single shocked gasp before stumbling back, pressing his hands against the his now profusely bleeding wound.

Was it wrong that Wilbur took intense satisfaction from seeing that green sweater get stained with a darker crimson? Did Wilbur even care?

It didn’t matter.

Letting out a feral shout, Wilbur jumped on top of a still weakened Dream, pinning him to the ground. Dream let out a cry of pain as his head hit the stone floor.

Wilbur grinned.

“Dream, Dream, Dream,” he said, letting out a slightly unhinged laugh, “You’ve screwed up this time.”

To his credit, Dream was not panicking as much as he could have. There was a cool smile on his face, like Wilbur could do nothing to hurt him.

“And how is that?” Dream asked.

Wilbur chuckled at the blood dripping out of Dream’s mouth. “You think you can escape this Dream?” he asked, “You think you can get away scot-free with *my* little brother?”

Wilbur pulled a splash potion out of his pocket and slammed it against the ground. The shattered glass sprayed everywhere as the potion healed Dream’s stab wound.

Wilbur held his sword to Dream’s neck.

“One wrong move,” Wilbur whispered, “And I’ll kill you where you lie.”

“Oh yeah?” Dream challenged, “And if I don’t tell you what you want?”

Wilbur smiled. “Oh Dream,” he said, “There are far worse things than death.” He glanced down at Dream’s hand. “I mean, wasn’t it your marvelous idea to remove Technoblade’s fingers?”

This time, Dream started struggling. “What are you doing?” he demanded, “Are you crazy?”

Wilbur giggled. “Maybe I am, Dream,” he admitted, grabbing Dream’s wrist and twisting it back so it broke with a satisfying *crack*, “Maybe I’m as crazy as everyone says I am. After all, I trusted *you*. ”

Wilbur slammed Dream’s hand against the ground, causing Dream to let out a pained sound.

Good.

“Besides, Dream,” Wilbur said, “I’m the villain, remember? I don’t have to play by the rules.”

Resting his sword against Dream’s neck in a slightly awkward fashion, Wilbur pulled a knife out of his inventory and dangled it over Dream’s fingers.

“I will not hesitate,” Wilbur said, “So start talking. What’s Logstedshire?”

Dream snorted. “I told you, I don’t have any idea—”

Wilbur didn’t hesitate.

Dream shrieked.

Wilbur tutted. “You have nine more of these, Dream,” he cooed, “And I can always take larger limbs—”

“No, no wait!” Dream cried, sounding suddenly pathetic, “Wait!”

“Then tell me,” Wilbur growled, “It’s not that hard, really. Just tell me, what is Logstedshire?”

“It’s not a what,” Dream gasped, “It’s a place.”

“Oh yeah?” Wilbur challenged, “Where?”

“Why does it—” Wilbur slowly brought the knife down. “OKAY, OKAY! It was this beach, okay? Far away!”

Wilbur lessened the pressure on the knife. “What does it have to do with Tommy?”

Dream was gasping for breath now. “It was where he was exiled,” he said, his voice now desperate, “The second time.”

Wilbur snarled, fully bringing down the knife. “Tommy hasn’t *been* exiled a second—”

“YES, YES, HE HAS!” Dream shrieked. And Wilbur could see actual tears coming from under the mask. “I’m from the future!”

This time, Wilbur only lessened the pressure on the knife out of shock. “Are you kidding me?”

“No,” Dream said, his voice sounded a bit like rambling whimpers now, “No, no, I’m from the future, and so is Tommy, and Tubbo, I think Technoblade, and probably Schlatt, because he’s really changed suddenly and the way he—”

“God, don’t you shut up?” Wilbur snarled.

Dream shut his mouth instantly.

Okay. So apparently Dream was from the bloody future. Apparently, *Tommy* was from the bloody future. Apparently, bloody Schlatt was from the future.

It would make sense, in a strange way. It would at least explain the abrupt change in mannerisms from Tommy after a single night. And it would explain why Schlatt started to pretend to be nice, or whatever the hell he was doing now.

“Tell me something then, *Dream*,” Wilbur whispered, his voice full of venom, “If you’re telling the truth, which I quite frankly doubt, I have only two questions for you.”

Wilbur held the knife a millimeter above Dream’s fingers.

“Why was Tommy exiled?” Wilbur whispered, “And why is he so *different*?”

Despite the obvious agony Dream was in, he smiled. “But I thought you liked the change in Tommy. Isn’t he so much more fun when submissive?”

Submissive. “Thank you for finally behaving yourself, Tommy.”

Wilbur’s hand holding the knife was trembling, and Wilbur wasn’t even sure why.

“He’s not... what does that even mean?” Wilbur snarled.

Dream laughed, still sounding agonized while doing so. “I mean what I said!” There was a more hysterical hint to your tone now. “I made him something better after *Tubbo* exiled him! I—”

“Wait,” Wilbur interrupted, “What do you mean *Tubbo* exiled him?”

Dream was full on smiling now. “He exiled Tommy. After Schlatt died, he took over L’manberg and exiled Tommy almost instantly.”

Wilbur let out a snarl. How dare Tubbo do that to Tommy? Tommy was so stupidly trusting, so stupidly loyal to those who were never going to be loyal to him. And Tubbo kept taking that trust and throwing it into the goddamn dirt.

But that wasn’t the point right now. That wasn’t what Wilbur needed to be focusing on.

“Dream,” Wilbur said dangerously, “What do you mean, *you* made him something better?”

Dream let out a sobbing laugh. “I didn’t do anything you hadn’t already done to him.”

Wilbur pressed his blade down, and Dream started making gasping sounds of pain. “What the hell did you do?”

“I showed him his place! I made him better! I—”

“Dream hurt and emotionally manipulated Tommy to the point that Tommy became suicidal.”

Wilbur didn’t want to hear this. Wilbur didn’t need to hear this.

“Where’s Tommy?” Wilbur growled.

Dream’s smile only grew wider.

“He’s dead.”

He’s dead.

Dead.

“I promise not to leave.”

“WILBUR!”

“No,” Wilbur breathed out, not even thinking about the knife in his hand, “You’re lying, you’re lying, I heard him, he’s not dead, I heard him, I *heard him*—”

“He killed himself,” Dream continued, beginning to laugh, “He choked himself on his own chains after he realized you weren’t coming to save him, after he—”

Wilbur let out a guttural scream and rammed the knife straight into Dream’s chest.

It only took a moment for Dream to cease breathing, but Wilbur didn’t care about that. As a matter of fact, Wilbur could hardly focus on anything at all.

Dead, killed himself, dead, suicidal, roof, chains, dead, weren’t coming to save him, I’ll protect you, dead, Dead, Dead, DEAD—

No, no, it couldn’t be true, it couldn’t be, it couldn’t—

And why not? Dream was telling the truth before; Dream was literally being tortured; he had nothing to gain from lying; he *knew* that was a sure way to get killed; he wouldn’t lie about that.

Besides, after the roof, after what Techno said, after what *Dream* said—

The image of Tommy’s limp form, an arrow through his chest, the blood staining his uniform, flashed across Wilbur’s mind, and for a moment Wilbur couldn’t breathe at all.

Back then Tommy could respawn, back then—

Dream’s body disappeared out from underneath Wilbur, a sign that his body was going to begin the respawn process soon.

But Wilbur didn’t care about that even as Dream’s inventory clattered to the ground in an unseemly pile.

And then Wilbur spotted the glint of chains in the pile.

Dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, dead—

Wilbur brought his bloodstained hands to his hair and *screamed*.

Tommy was dead. Tommy was dead because of Wilbur’s own negligence, because of Wilbur’s own failures. Tommy was dead because Wilbur was too ignorant, too foolish, because he refused to see sense when even Tommy warned him, when Tommy *screamed* for him.

Wilbur was drowning. He pressed his palms against his eyes, but the tears only mixed with the blood, causing Wilbur to taste both salt and metal as he continued to scream.

Oh, why did it have to be *Tommy*?

“If-if I were to jump off this roof right now, would you kill yourself?” Tommy had once asked, his voice shaking.

The answer had been yes. The answer had *always* been yes.

Wilbur's hands were shaking as he reached for the knife that he had used to kill Dream, the knife that was only a temporary death for that green monster.

For Wilbur, it would be permanent.

Wilbur raised the knife with trembling fingers, not even trying to swallow back the tears he was choking on as he pointed the blade to his chest.

His hands wouldn't move apart from their increased trembling.

Wilbur gritted his teeth, forcing his hands to move the knife closer to his chest.

Instead, they shook so much that the knife actually slipped out from his fingers, falling to the floor with a loud clatter.

Wilbur let out another broken sob. Of course. Of course, even his own body would betray him. Of course, Wilbur couldn't even do the one thing he was destined to do since he was four-years-old, pinned down by that spider.

Wilbur couldn't stay here, though. He couldn't stand the thought of living, he couldn't stand the thought of a world without Tommy, he couldn't stand the thought of going to another funeral, of seeing another grave, of the promises he failed to keep—

Practically in a daze, tears still streaming down his face, Wilbur picked up his sword and stumbled down the hall toward Phil's cell, not caring how off balanced he was as he shoved open the iron door.

"Phil," Wilbur gasped, not even looking at the man's reaction, "*Phil*."

"Wilbur?" Phil's voice said through the fog, "Mate, what's wrong?"

Wilbur stumbled forward, bringing the tip of the sword to haphazardly slice through the ropes binding Phil in place.

Phil looked up at him, but Wilbur couldn't even make out his expression. Everything was fuzzy, like the world was trying to close in all around him but *couldn't* for some damn reason.

"Mate?"

Phil was unsteadily climbing to his feet now, and Wilbur grabbed his wrist, forcing the hilt of his sword into Phil's hands.

He had to die; he had to die; he had to see Tommy again.

"Phil, Phil, you have to kill me," Wilbur babbled, "Phil, kill me, Phil—"

Phil didn't kill him.

"Wilbur?" Why was Phil's voice so soft? Why did he sound like he cared? "Wilbur, what are you talking about? Why would I—"

“KILL ME PHIL!” Wilbur screamed.

“Why!”

No, no, no, why didn't Phil understand?!

“Tommy’s dead!” Wilbur’s throat was sore from the screaming, but Wilbur didn’t care. “He’s dead; I have nothing to live for anymore; please Phil!”

This time, Phil’s voice was barely comprehensible over the raging tide of Wilbur’s own thoughts. “What? Wil—”

“JUST DO IT!” Wilbur clung onto Phil’s shoulders desperately, looking Phil straight in the eyes. They were the same color as Tommy’s. “You never cared about me anyway; Tommy’s dead; Tommy’s gone; I just want to see him again, *please!*”

“Wil, I’m not going to—”

Wilbur was all but sobbing into Phil’s shoulder now. He could barely breathe, every inhale sounding like a wheeze. “Please, please, I need it, I deserve it, I killed Techno, did you know that? I killed him, I killed your favorite, please, just kill me, end it, Tommy’s dead, Tommy’s gone, please—”

Wilbur stopped short at the sound of metal clattering against the floor.

“No,” Phil said, his voice hard, “I’m not killing you.”

No, no, Phil was supposed to kill him, Phil was supposed to hate him, Phil—

His mind felt like cotton, and everything went dark.

Chapter End Notes

Welp.

I am here to state that I do not condone Wilbur's torture of Dream.

But at least Wilbur knows about the time travel.

Thank you for reading, please be nice in the comments, and I hope you enjoyed! <3

Dadza Please We Beg

Chapter Summary

Phil has a moment with both of his boys.

Chapter Notes

tw; suicidal thoughts, post traumatic stress disorder, denial, grief, fake character death, weapons, sort of attempted patricide, crying, broken familial relationships

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil's mind was racing as he held a freshly collapsed Wilbur in his arms.

Tommy was dead apparently. Tommy was *dead*.

Wilbur hadn't provided any more details apart from that fact, but he sounded so certain, so heartbroken, that Phil couldn't doubt for a moment that it was anything but the truth.

Tommy was gone.

Phil recalled the first time he held Tommy in his arms, Kristin dying next to him. Phil remembered how she smiled and said,

"Take care of him."

And now, with his wing throbbing and Wilbur unconscious in his arms, Phil realized just how much he failed.

Unless, of course, Wilbur was wrong, and Tommy wasn't dead, but Phil didn't allow himself to hope. He somewhat doubted that Wilbur would be so hysterical if he hadn't seen Tommy's body himself.

Phil carefully picked Wilbur up in his arms, and he was surprised by how light he was. Then again, Wilbur hadn't seemed particularly focused on taking care of himself in his desperate search for Tommy.

Phil remembered when Wilbur had always been this easy to carry, when Phil could simply scoop him up to earn a small giggle.

And now Phil's family was nothing but broken fractures of what it once was, and Phil couldn't blame anybody but himself.

Had Tommy died in a cold, dark room like this, frightened and alone? Had Tommy desperately wanted a hand to hold in his final moments?

Holding Wilbur slightly closer to himself than before, Phil made his way out of the cell, looking both ways for Dream. Phil was ninety-percent sure he had heard Dream's screams earlier, and he wouldn't be surprised if Wilbur had killed him.

That gave Phil a few hours to grab supplies and possibly try to find Tommy's body without Dream knowing.

Phil crept down the hallways, looking every which way for a door that could point to Tommy's location, but he saw nothing. It only made the horrible heaviness of grief press even harder on Phil's chest, but he tried to ignore it.

Now wasn't the time to grieve, not while Phil was making his way through a labyrinth.

Eventually, Phil found what seemed to be a common area, and he spotted a pile of items, probably Dream's. Wilbur really did kill him, then. There didn't seem to be anything of particular value. There were some food items and potions and a strange button object and weapons and armor. Still holding Wilbur, Phil awkwardly crouched down and grabbed the potions, armor, and weapons. He quickly ate some of the food before standing back up and spotting an enderchest.

Excellent.

Phil walked over to the enderchest and opened it, glad to see most of his valuables still intact. However, he was mostly interested in the golden totem he saw tucked away among his things. He quickly grabbed it and placed it in his inventory.

Since Phil had only one life, he always made sure to have a supply of totem of undying on hand. It was a shame he was down to one, but Phil could make do for now.

Phil had one with him when he was captured by Dream, but clearly Dream had taken it for something else.

Though he was careless enough not to actually have it on hand, if Wilbur had managed to kill him.

And with that, there was nothing left to do but leave. After a significant amount of wandering, in which Phil kept an eye out for what might have once been Tommy's cell, Phil finally found a ladder leading up to the surface.

When he had finally gotten to the top of the ladder, Wilbur still in tow, Phil realized something rather unfortunate.

He couldn't fly. Dream had ripped out a clump of his feathers on his right wing, so now any attempt in flying would leave him imbalanced, especially if he were to hold Wilbur while

doing it.

Phil supposed that left the tedious task of walking.

He had to assume that Manberg was still in the same general direction from this base as it had been in the old one, just by nature of the fact that Dream and Wilbur hadn't moved him to a very different location and more blocked off the passages of the old base.

So, glancing at the sun and hoping he was correct in his assumption that it was the morning, Phil determined the direction he was meant to be walking and walked.

Wilbur woke up after Phil had taken about two steps.

At first, Wilbur looked confused, blinking at Phil blearily, like he was being forced to wake up to eat breakfast.

"Phil?" Wilbur asked, his eyebrows still furrowed in confusion.

Then, Wilbur's eyes widened.

"Let go of me!"

Wilbur forced himself out of Phil's arms and landed on the ground with an uncomfortably loud thump.

"Wilbur—"

Wilbur was already shoving himself to his feet, backing away from Phil, his face furious. "What do you think you're doing?" he demanded, "You were supposed to kill me; I'm supposed to be dead!"

Wilbur might as well have taken the sword and plunged it into Phil's own heart.

"Wil—"

Wilbur shook his head, smiling suddenly. "No, I see how it is," he interrupted, "You want me to be punished. You want to see me suffer."

It was Phil's turn to shake his head. "Wilbur, no—"

"Don't lie to me!" Wilbur laughed, a tear escaping from his eye. He smiled grimly at Phil, taking another large step back. "I just... Phil, don't you see? I just want to die. I just want to *end* it all. Why won't you *let me*?"

Because as Phil stared at Wilbur, he didn't see someone who needed killing.

"You're my son," Phil said thickly, "I love you."

Wilbur's eyes widened again, and he took another step back, wrapping his arms around himself. "No, no, you're lying, that's not—you don't—then why did you—" Wilbur squeezed

his eyes shut. “Just... *stop lying!*”

And Phil suddenly understood what he needed to do.

“I’m sorry,” Phil said, the lump in his throat becoming more and more apparent by the minute, “I’m sorry for failing you, for making you feel abandoned, for making you think that I didn’t care.”

Wilbur was laughing again. “You’re not,” he whispered, shaking his head with his eyes still closed, “You’re not.”

“I am,” Phil vowed, taking a small step forward, “And I promise that I love you, and I will never stop loving you, because you are my son.”

Wilbur stopped laughing. As a matter of fact, he was standing deathly still, staring at Phil like he was the strangest puzzle he had ever seen.

“I don’t understand,” Wilbur said slowly. He gave Phil a sad smile, and his voice turned pleading. “Phil... why can’t you just kill me?”

Phil took another step forward. “Because I promised I wouldn’t, because it’s my job to protect you, because I love you.”

Wilbur was frowning now, his arms still wrapped tightly around himself. “You really are a fool,” he growled, “How do you know I won’t kill you as soon as I get close enough?” Wilbur smiled again. “It would be so easy too. Just a simple summoning of a sword and...”

“Maybe you would kill me,” Phil said, “But if you were, I think you might have done it earlier, when I was in chains, and you had the sword.”

Wilbur still looked slightly lost in thought, and Phil wondered what he was thinking about. “Tommy’s dead,” he whispered.

Phil’s voice cracked when he next spoke, “I know.”

Wilbur closed his eyes. “I want to see him again.”

Phil took another step forward, a tear slipping down his cheek. “Me too.”

“But you won’t kill me.”

“No.” Another step forward.

“I could try to kill myself.”

“I’d stop you.” Another step.

“I’d like to see you try.”

One more step, and Phil was right in front of Wilbur, pulling the totem of undying out of his inventory and holding it in front of him.

“You see this?” Phil said, his voice serious. Wilbur’s eyes flitted down to the totem, and his expression blanched. “I’ll force this into your hands if you’re dying. I—” Phil let out a sob. “I refuse to lose another son.”

Wilbur stared down at the totem and back up at Phil. His face darkened, and he brought his hand up.

A crossbow materialized in Wilbur’s hand, and now Wilbur was resting the bolt of a crossbow directly on top of Phil’s chest.

Wilbur was breathing heavily, as though the action had taken extraordinary amounts of energy. “Oh, Phil,” Wilbur breathed out, grinning like a feral animal, “I think you should be more worried about yourself than for me.”

Phil supposed he should have seen this coming. Wilbur himself warned him.

“You won’t die,” Wilbur said, “You’re holding that totem.”

Phil raised his eyebrows. “Yeah?”

Phil dropped the totem, and it bounced on the grassy ground with an anti-climactic thump.

Wilbur looked down at the totem before returning his gaze back to his crossbow.

“That doesn’t matter,” Wilbur growled, “I don’t care if I kill you. And even if I did, I can always shove the thing back into your hand.”

“Okay,” Phil said simply, “If I live, I’ll be there to stop you from dying. If I don’t, the totem is left to protect you.”

Wilbur laughed. “There’s only one thing to do, then,” he whispered, “I’ll kill you and then kill myself, and that damn totem can stay lying in the grass.”

“Okay, if that's what you decide to do, I'm not exactly in a position to stop you.”

There was a silence. Phil waited for Wilbur to press the trigger of the crossbow, which began shaking slightly in Wilbur’s hold.

Instead, the weapon slipped out of Wilbur’s fingers.

Wilbur stared at the crossbow, which was now lying on the grass with the totem, and he let out a startled laugh, which dissolved into a hysterical cackle, which became choking sobs.

And then Wilbur was clutching onto Phil’s robes, resting his forehead against his shoulder.

“I hate you,” Wilbur hissed between sobs, “I hate you, I hate you, you should have killed me, I hate you—”

Phil only wrapped his hands around Wilbur, holding him close for what felt like the first time in years.

“I love you,” Phil countered.

“I *don't*,” Wilbur said with venom, practically spitting the words.

Out of the corner of his eyes, Phil spotted Manberg's scouts coming from the trees, having clearly heard the commotion.

Phil made eye contact with a few of them and gestured to the entrance of the base he had just existed, hoping that they could possibly catch Dream before he respawned all the way.

A few scouts caught the message and went down in to the labyrinth.

The other few approached Phil and Wilbur, one pulling out a pair of cuffs.

Phil waited a few more minutes before reluctantly pulling himself out of the hug, giving Wilbur a heavy look.

“Wil...” he said slowly.

Wilbur looked at the scouts, glaring in contempt. He flexed his hand as though he were trying to summon a weapon, but he must have run out of them in his inventory, or maybe he just gave up, because his shoulders slumped slightly.

“Well, that's it then,” Wilbur said, smiling grimly, “I couldn't even kill myself right.”

Wilbur didn't try to resist as the scouts cuffed his wrists behind his back. As a matter of fact, he barely did anything, his eyes becoming dull.

Phil knew that look. He had seen it before in his travels.

Wilbur had given up.

Technoblade was exhausted.

HAHA TECHNOTIRED. I AM HERE TO PRESENT SOME REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT CALLED A SLEEP SCHEDULE. A SNEAK SCHEDULE? NO, SLEEP. SNEAK. SLEEP. SNEAK. SLEEP.

He had managed a scant two hours of sleep (not counting the three hours of staring blankly at the ceiling) after his conversation and message to Wilbur. Technoblade had then taken a shower, washed the blood off Max the dog, and worked through exercises with the remaining stub of his arm.

Now Technoblade was mindlessly walking through the halls, wondering if he should maybe tell Schlatt about Tubbo's stupidity or at least declare that he was going to deal with some

egg that was destined to terrorize the area.

But as Technoblade was deciding what exactly he wanted to do, he was interrupted by Quackity of all people.

QUACKITY. GET OUT OF OUR SIGHT YOU CRAZY DUCK MAN. OH A DUCK WALKED UP TO THE LEMONADE STAND AND HE SAID OT THE MAN RUNNING THE STAND. HEY. BUM BUM BUM. GOT ANY—

“We found Phil,” Quackity said, interrupting Chat’s stupid song.

WHAT. PHILZA MINECRAFT’S SO BRAVVVEEEEE. PHIL HAS RETURNED. FINALLY.

“Wait, what?” Technoblade said, trying to organize his thoughts.

“We received some calls from our scouts,” Quackity explained, “Phil escaped with Wilbur.”

Yeah, that explained nothing.

“*With* Wilbur?” Techno clarified, “Wasn’t Wilbur the one who imprisoned him in the first place?”

Quackity frowned. “Yeah, it doesn’t make much sense to me either; I’m just repeating what I heard.”

YOUR RESOURCES ARE SCEWED. DID YOU USE GOOGLE SCHOLAR? PLEASE DON’T TELL ME YOU USED WIKIPEDIA.

Techno was still struggling to wrap his mind around the fact that his dad had managed to escape Dream in less than twenty-four hours of being in his custody. Technoblade had been trapped in that place for *days* and had even failed his initial escape attempt.

Techno pushed away the discomfort in his chest at the thought.

TECHNOSAD. I’VE SAID IT ONCE AND I’LL SAY IT AGAIN, PLEASE GET THERAPY. OH WHERE IS THE THERAPY? OH WHERE IS THE THERAPY? OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHERE, OH WHEEEERRRRRRREEEEEE. IS THE THERAPY?

“Alright then,” Technoblade said to Quackity, “Do you know when he’ll be getting back?”

Quackity shrugged. “Maybe in like two hours, give or take?”

TWO HOURS? THAT’S TOO MANY HOURS. WAS... WAS THAT A PUN? I love punz! NO, PUNS.

Those next two hours could not have been slower.

In his concern over seeing Phil again, Tubbo's idiotic deal with Dream completely left Technoblade's memory, and instead, Techno spent most of his time obsessing over what he would do when he saw Phil.

Or what Phil would do when he saw Technoblade.

Techno found his way to the stables near the White House, where Carl was resting. Leaning against his trusty horse, Techno ran his fingers through his now short hair, tugging at it in frustration.

Phil used to braid his hair. Now there wasn't enough hair to braid.

TECHNOBRAID OUR BELOVED. WE CAN HAVE AN ARMY OF TECHNOBRAIDS NOW. BABY TECHNOBRAIDS. ADORABLE.

And what would Phil think when he realized what Technoblade had to do to escape? Or did Phil already know?

"Technoblade never dies," Techno muttered to himself.

What was once a boastful claim was now a solemn vow. He wouldn't die again. Never again.

Techno wasn't entirely sure how long he sat there, but it felt like an eternity to wait for Phil to finally come back.

Techno was busy staring up at the ceiling of the stable, idly making out patterns in the wood grain and listening to Chat singing a song about revolution, when he heard someone approach.

Instantly, Techno was on his feet, pulling out his sword and pointing it at the intruder.

He froze when he saw who it was.

Phil smiled sadly at Techno and said, "Hey, mate."

PHIL. DADZA. FINALLY DADZA IS BACK. IT'S BEEN SO LONG. PHILZA MINECRAFT IS THE ONLY MAN EVER.

Techno dispelled his sword instantly, his heartrate picking up slightly.

"Phil," Techno breathed out, feeling a bit like when he was caught sneaking out to fight monsters at night. He must look shameful, armless and braidless and pointing swords at allies.

BLASPHEMY. WHO DARE SPREAD SUCH HORRID THOUGHTS? TECHNO THOUGHTS CEASE NOW.

"Techno," Phil said quietly, "How are you?"

Techno snorted. "I'm fine," he said quickly, "Sorry for jumping on you."

“It’s fine,” Phil said.

THAT MAN COULD STAB ME AND I’D THANK HIM. DADZA, DADZA, DADZA, DADZA

“So,” Techno said awkwardly, “You escaped?”

Phil’s smile dimmed. “Yeah, uh, Wilbur basically freed me.”

WHAT? WHAT ALTERNATE UNIVERSE HAVE WE LANDED IN? I DON’T KNOW BUT I DON’T LIKE IT.

Technoblade couldn’t deny that the news surprised him as well. Last time Technoblade checked, Wilbur thought Phil hated him, and he couldn’t care less what happened to their father.

“Why?”

Phil looked away, staring blankly at the wall. “Tommy’s dead.”

No.

Technoblade stumbled backward, his breath hitching.

“I’m sorry,” he said, massaging his chest, “I think I heard you wrong, because I could have sworn you said that Tommy is *dead*—”

Phil’s face crumbled, and he looked Techno in the eyes. “I’m so sorry.”

No, no, there was no way that was possible. There was no way. Dream had bartered with Tubbo over Tommy only hours ago. Tommy couldn’t be dead; it simply didn’t make any sense for Dream to kill him.

“He’s not dead,” Techno said firmly, “Phil, he’s only on one life.”

Tears were coming down Phil’s face again, and Technoblade hated it, because Tommy *wasn’t dead*.

“I know,” Phil whispered, “I know.”

“Then you know that this isn’t a particularly funny joke,” Techno said, “Seriously, you brought Tommy back with you when you escaped, right?”

Phil didn’t say anything.

“Phil.”

“Techno,” Phil whispered, “Wilbur wanted me to kill him. Tommy is dead.”

“No,” Technoblade said, stepping forward and grabbing Phil by the shoulder, hoping that he could come to his senses, “No, no, no, Wilbur must have been lying to you; we have to go

back; we have to save Tommy—”

“He wasn’t lying,” Phil whispered, “You can ask him yourself if you want.”

Techno’s chest felt a little bit like Wilbur had thrown another knife into it, and he was finding it increasingly harder to breathe through the ridiculousness of Phil’s claim.

“He’s not dead, Phil,” Technoblade repeated, squeezing Phil’s shoulder harder, “I refuse to let him die, I’m supposed to protect him, he’s not *dead*.”

Phil brought his hands up and put them on Techno’s shoulders. “I’m so, so sorry, Techno.”

“He’s not dead,” Techno said.

Phil wrapped his arms around Techno, and Techno was surprised to find he didn’t try to pull away, instead sinking into the hug. In his defense, it had been a long time since he had one.

Techno brought his hands up to return the embrace, and his stomach tightened when he was only able to use one arm.

“He’s not dead,” Techno repeated, as though saying it enough times would make it true.

“I’m so sorry.”

Phil was crying, Techno realized. Techno was not equipped to deal with these situations, especially when he felt like his own brain was short-circuiting.

“Don’t worry about this, Phil,” Techno said, hoping to distract his father, “Tommy’s not dead, I’m sure, so why don’t we worry about other things, like how much of a disappointment I’ve become.”

Techno meant it as a lighthearted statement, something for Phil to focus on instead of the horrifying truth, but instead, Phil only hugged Techno tighter to himself, as though Techno had said some horrifying thing.

“You’re not a disappointment,” Phil whispered, “I’m so, so proud of you, Tech, but you don’t need to pretend to be okay for me.”

Techno’s eyes were burning for some stupid reason, and his voices filtered in and out of his hearing.

Therapy at last. All I feel is pain. Phil is right, Techno beloved.

“I’m fine, Phil,” Techno said, the statement well practiced on his tongue.

“You’re not,” Phil said gently, tears still streaming down his cheeks, “And that’s okay.”

Listen to him. Please.

Techno sighed.

“Fine.”

Chapter End Notes

Wilbur Soot is NOT okay.

Technoblade is also not okay.

Neither is Phil, but at least he's doing decent on the parenting department for once.

idk how i feel about this chapter, but whatever, thank you for reading, i hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

Poor Plans are Poor

Chapter Summary

Plans are made while Tubbo tries to go about his day.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, implied/referenced fake character death, implied/referenced child abuse, referenced alcoholism, stress

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo's morning had started rather eventfully.

He had woken up with his face uncomfortably wedged against his desk, the sound of his communicator shrilly ringing in his ears.

Tubbo jolted awake, reaching for his communicator as he tried to figure out what was going on. Why was he in his office? Wait, had he fallen asleep? But he was supposed to be working out solutions for the Dream problem.

Tubbo quickly rubbed the sleep from his eyes and focused his vision on his still buzzing communicator. Spotting it sitting near the edge of the desk, he quickly grabbed the smooth device and looked at the caller id.

Niki.

Tubbo answered, bringing his communicator to his ear as he massaged his cheek where his face had been smashed against the desk.

"Hello?" Tubbo asked, absently standing up and heading to the closet of his office, ready to change into a suit.

"Tubbo!" Niki exclaimed, her voice a mix of frantic and furious, "Are you alright?"

Tubbo frowned as he opened the closet and grabbed the suit from the hanger. How had Niki found out the news about Tommy so quickly? Surely she didn't know about the deal Tubbo made with Dream? Surely Techno hadn't revealed that so soon?

Still, if Niki was asking if Tubbo was alright, she surely knew that Tommy had run away, so he would just go off of that with his reply.

Letting out a low breath, Tubbo said, “I’m going to be perfectly honest with you, Niki, I’m not doing to great.” He began shedding out of his casual attire and began pulling on the stiff suit. “You know, Tommy’s missing, and it’s really all my fault, and it’s rather stressful, but I’m—”

“Wait,” Niki interrupted, and Tubbo winced at how sharp her tone was, “What do you mean, Tommy’s missing?”

Tubbo stopped short. “What do you mean, ‘what do you mean?’” he demanded.

“I was asking about Schlatt, not about whatever happened to Tommy,” Niki said, “What happened? Why is he missing? Does it have to do with Schlatt?”

Oh. That actually made a lot of sense, considering that all of Schlatt’s crimes had been basically aired to the public.

“No, no, no,” Tubbo said quickly, continuing to finish button his suit, “Schlatt’s fine, but Tommy tried to save Technoblade, and now Dream has him—”

“What?!”

Tubbo let out a grim laugh. “Yeah, me too, anyway, so things have been a bit strained since then,” he continued, “You don’t have to worry about me or Schlatt, though, Niki. He’s fine; he hasn’t hurt a fly.”

“Tubbo, this article—”

“Is lying,” Tubbo lied curtly, “Schlatt’s fine, okay?”

“Tubbo... I know better than anyone what Schlatt can be like...”

Tubbo jumped when he heard scratching sound on his door, but he wasn’t exactly going to complain at the excuse to get out of his uncomfortable conversation.

“Oh, look, somebody needs me!” Tubbo exclaimed, hurriedly tying his tie, “Sorry, Niki, have to go, so nice speaking to you, bye!”

And with that, Tubbo quickly ended the call, striding across the room and opening the door to see who the strange scratching was coming from.

Tubbo looked down to see Clementine sitting in front of him, staring up at Tubbo with wide eyes.

“Clementine?” Tubbo asked, crouching down in front of the dog, “What are you doing here?”

Clementine let out a strange whimpering sound, pressing her nose against Tubbo’s hand, almost like she were lonely or looking for...

Oh.

“You miss Tommy?” Tubbo asked quietly, scratching behind Clementine’s ears, “Because we can get him back, I promise.”

Clementine wagged her tail at that, perking up ever so slightly.

“Thanks for the save, by the way,” Tubbo said, standing up to head to the kitchens for an apple or something, “You just got me out of what might have been an awkward conversation.”

Clementine barked, probably in approval as she followed Tubbo down the halls. Tubbo noted that the sun was already shining through the windows, and he quickly glanced down at his communicator for the time.

It was ten until eight in the morning.

God, Tubbo really had slept in.

Tubbo’s mind instantly went to Tommy. Was he doing okay? Well, that was a stupid question; of course, he wasn’t doing okay. He was with *Dream*. Had Dream hurt him yet? Had Dream tried to manipulate him yet? Was Tommy standing on top of a pillar, ready to jump?

Clementine nipped at Tubbo’s ankles, and Tubbo realized that he had been standing in the middle of the hall.

Tubbo took a deep breath. Tommy wasn’t at the broken remains of Logstedshire. Tommy wouldn’t be making any tall towers to jump off of. Probably. Hopefully.

Please be alright.

All of this brought Tubbo’s mind back to the exchange arranged for Friday, and his stomach clenched.

What if Dream was lying? What if Dream didn’t keep to his word and kept Tommy? What if Dream was—

“You thinking about?”

Tubbo jumped with a startled shout, bringing his hand to his chest and searching for the source of the voice.

He froze when he saw George standing in front of him, not wearing a suit or anything all that professional, but it was the first time Tubbo had seen him in the White House in what felt like *years*.

“George?” Tubbo asked.

George smiled in a way that looked more like a grimace, and he rubbed the back of his neck. “Hi,” he said, “Sorry for scaring you.”

Tubbo massaged his chest and exhaled. “No, it’s fine,” he said, running his hair back, “What are you doing here?”

George sighed. “Well, I was thinking about this Dream situation,” he began slowly.

Tubbo’s chest tightened again. “Oh,” he said quietly.

George grimaced. “Yeah,” he said, “I tried to contact him, but he kind of ignored all of my messages.”

That sounded like Dream, unfortunately. The man had kind of made it clear that he was getting rid of all ties after he screamed at Tommy the day everything went to hell.

“Yeah, uh, that sounds like him,” Tubbo said, wincing at his own awkwardness.

George sighed and stuffed his hands into his pockets. “Anyway, I was going to see if I can’t find any way to help with the... situation, I guess? To be honest, I still have no idea what’s going on, but I can try to make things right for my earlier screw-up, you know?”

“Technoblade is already back,” Tubbo said, “Tommy’s been taken by Dream, and Phil is also under Dream and Wilbur’s custody.”

George stared at Tubbo, his mouth agape. “All that?” he asked, “In less than a day?”

“Yep!” Tubbo said, popping the ‘p’, “Oh, and now the people are mad at Schlatt for being a terrible person before all this happened.”

George frowned. “Oh yeah, I saw the papers,” he said, “Quackity already reassured me that everything’s fine now, but are you sure you’re safe?”

This was going to get exhausting.

Tubbo nodded. “Yes, it’s fine,” he said, “Anyway, you said you wanted to help?”

“Yeah.” George fished around in his pocket and pulled out his communicator. “See, Quackity said that it might be a good idea for me to see if I can’t have a conversation with Dream that could serve as a trap, but...”

“But he’s your friend,” Tubbo finished for him.

George nodded. “I know it’s stupid.” He let out a grim chuckle. “I just can’t get it out of my head, you know?”

Tubbo thought back to the way Tommy talked about Wilbur. “Yeah, I get it.”

George sighed. “Anyway, I’m supposed to talk to Schlatt about it, so I’ll be going now. See you later?”

Tubbo gave George a half-hearted wave. “Yeah,” he said, “See ya.”

And with that, George continued down the hall to the Schlatt's office.

Tubbo sighed and continued to the kitchen, trying to remember the last time he ate. Probably yesterday morning, come to think of it.

Tubbo reached the kitchen and fed himself without incident. Nobody else was there, so Tubbo didn't exactly have anyone to make conversation with or argue with or really do anything of interest with. Instead, Tubbo just sat down and ate an apple, absently petting Clementine's fur, and trying to decide the pros and cons of having George try to lead Dream into a trap.

On one hand, they could kill Dream.

On the other hand, Dream could see right through the entire thing and kill George.

Either way, it didn't guarantee Tommy's safety.

Tubbo considered going to Schlatt, but he was probably busy with the mess that the press had created, not to mention this plan with George. And the last time Tubbo insisted on being in the loop, he had been forced to lie to Tommy, which only made things worse for everyone.

So, instead, Tubbo just went back to his office and tried to focus on some meaningless paperwork in a weak attempt to distract himself from the disaster that his life had become. All Tubbo really managed to do was stare at papers while his mind flashed through the horrible possibilities of what Tommy might be going through.

Of course, he was interrupted about twenty-minutes into this useless exercise by someone knocking on his door.

"Who is it?" Tubbo asked tiredly, putting his head in his hands.

"It's me," Schlatt's voice said on the other side of the door, "Can I come in?"

Tubbo hesitated. Did he want to see Schlatt? After everything, did he really want to look Schlatt in the eyes and pretend that everything hadn't gone wrong in part of Schlatt's decisions?

Schlatt was the one to choose not to tell Tommy about Techno.

Then again, Tubbo was the one who chose to listen.

"Fine," Tubbo said shortly.

Tubbo kept his eyes perfectly trained on the door knob as it turned, and Schlatt swung the door open.

Schlatt looked... well, a little unkempt. Dark eye-bags hung under his eyes. His hair wasn't as smoothed back as it normally was, and there was a rumpled quality to his suit.

Tubbo stiffened, and for a terrifying moment, he half-expected to see Schlatt carrying a bottle of alcohol.

But no. Schlatt wasn't holding anything, and he was still holding himself completely steadily.

"How's it going?" Schlatt asked, closing the door behind him.

"Guess," Tubbo replied curtly. He grimaced at his rudeness. "How was your conversation with George?"

Schlatt groaned. "Well, we may have made the worst plan in the history of plans," he said, stepping a little further into the room, "But last time we did things without talking to you about it, you got upset, so I figured I'd come and fill you in anyway."

Tubbo blinked, surprised. It was true that he had a bit of an embarrassing outburst yesterday when Schlatt, Phil, and Quackity had planned to rescue Technoblade without him, but Tubbo hadn't exactly expected Schlatt to remember it in the midst of everything else that had happened.

"Oh," Tubbo said, "Okay."

Schlatt chuckled. "Anyway," he said, "Because of this press situation, I'm going to have a speech that announces my official resignation this afternoon."

Wait, a speech to announce *what now*?

Tubbo stared up at Schlatt in shock. "What?" he demanded.

"Oh." Schlatt smiled grimly. "I thought I told you. I'm resigning and giving the presidency to Quackity for the rest of the term."

But no, now was the *worst* possible time for this sort of thing.

"Right now?!" Tubbo's voice raised in pitch, and he didn't even bother to try and keep it down. "Dream is still *out there*—"

"And ideally," Schlatt interrupted, "he won't be after today. Let me just tell you the plan, alright?"

Tubbo frowned, but he nodded.

"Okay, so during the speech, George is going to try to speak to Dream far away from Manberg," Schlatt explained, "A group of scouts with invisibility potions is going with him."

"And then they're going to jump him," Tubbo finished for him.

Schlatt nodded. "Hopefully, we can capture him so that he can give up Tommy and Philza's location."

Yeah, things were never that easy.

“And if capture isn’t an option?” Tubbo asked.

Schlatt grimaced. “Then, he’ll be killed, and we’ll be back at square one.”

“Yeah, that doesn’t exactly sound like much of a plan,” Tubbo snapped, pushing himself out of his chair, “And why are we doing this *during* the speech?”

“Less of a chance for Dream to try to do anything during the public event,” Schlatt explained, “We’ll have our eyes peeled for Wilbur.”

Well, Tubbo supposed that made sense.

“Okay, but I think this plan—”

They were interrupted by Schlatt’s communicator ringing, and Schlatt quickly moved to answer it.

“Hey, Quackity, what’s—” Schlatt’s eyes widened. “Seriously?” He grinned. “That’s great! Where’s Tommy?” And the frown was back. “Okay, keep me updated.”

Tubbo’s anxiety mounted as Schlatt put the communicator away and gave Tubbo a grim look.

“Well, I have some good news, and some bad news,” Schlatt said.

Tubbo swallowed. “What?”

“Good news is that Philza escaped, and Wilbur is in custody.” Schlatt idly straightened his tie. “The bad news is we don’t know where Tommy is.”

Tubbo’s stomach dropped.

“We’ll find him,” Schlatt promised, “I’ll keep you posted.”

Tubbo nodded, his mind racing. Why wasn’t Tommy with them? Did Phil leave Tommy? Was Tommy dead? Had Dream taken him farther away?

“When will they be back?” Tubbo asked, trying to distract himself from the panic in his thoughts.

“A few hours.”

They didn’t need to wait a few hours. Not twenty minutes after Schlatt had left the room was Fundy bursting through Tubbo’s door in his place, his eyes unreadable.

But Tubbo would never, ever forget the first words that came out of Fundy’s mouth.

“Tommy’s dead.”

This chapter was supposed to have a lot more going on but my sister was watching red vs blue with my dad and i was trying to delicately eat m&ms and popcorn in a really inconvenient way b/c my wisdom teeth got out recently, so yeah.

Hopefully next chapter things will go down. (Hopefully i'll write and post it Saturday)

But it will probably be the chapter after next at this rate.

Oh well.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

THIS IS A MANDATORY REST STOP. DO A JIG. SING A SONG. CLOSE THE PAGE FOR FIVE SECONDS AND COME BACK. I will not judge. <3

Boom

Chapter Summary

Dream does many things.

That's all you really need to know.

Chapter Notes

tw: explosions, implied/referenced child abuse, Dream, ptsd, heart issues, death,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Tommy’s dead.”

Tubbo let the words fully process in his mind, struggling to understand. Tommy’s dead? How? When? How?

“What do you mean?” he asked, standing up and pressing his palms against his desk for support.

Fundy was gasping for breath, still tightly holding onto the doorknob, as though it were his only support in the world.

“Tommy,” Fundy said again, “Phil just called. Apparently, he’s *dead*.”

Yeah, Tubbo had believed that once before. He wasn’t about to fall for the same trick.

“Did he see the body?” Tubbo asked, “Because I’m not believing it unless I see the body.”

Fundy scowled.

“Seriously?” he demanded, “You find out your best friend is dead, and you just... refuse to believe it?”

Tubbo shut his eyes briefly, and his mind returned to seeing the pillar for the first time, to thinking that Tommy was dead, to mourning him before Tommy came back at Technoblade’s side calling Tubbo a monster.

The words still hurt.

“Fundy,” Tubbo said slowly, “I have thought Tommy was dead before only for him to be alive and far more well than I expected him to be. I refuse to grieve for my best friend all over again because you were all too foolish to try and confirm that he’s actually dead.”

Fundy stared at Tubbo with wide eyes, opening and closing his mouth like a fish out of water.

“You know,” he finally said, his eyes lighting up slightly, “You’ve kind of got a point, don’t you?”

Tubbo snorted. “Of course, I do,” he said, moving out from behind the desk. Despite his denial of Tommy’s death, there was simply no way it could be true, his heart was still racing.

“Where are you going?” Fundy asked as Tubbo moved out the door and passed him.

“I’m going to tell Schlatt to not believe Tommy’s dead for a minute,” he said, “And that they should still try to search for him.”

Fundy trailed Tubbo. “But hasn’t Schlatt seen the same things you have? Maybe he’s come to the same conclusion.”

Tubbo shook his head. “You can never tell.”

Instead of Schlatt’s office, Tubbo went to the situation room, since it was far simpler to keep track of communications between scouts there, and Tubbo highly doubted that they weren’t done storming the base that Phil and Wilbur had just escaped from.

Schlatt wasn’t stupid; he probably had ordered for the scouts to search for Tommy’s body. But Tubbo didn’t want to risk it, and if they did find the body, Tubbo would prefer to know immediately as opposed to receiving the information second hand.

Tubbo burst into the room, finding Schlatt speaking to some of the staff, a cup of coffee in hand.

“He’s still not done respawning sir,” one of the staff members said, moving a communicator away from their ear.

“No sign of Mr. Innit anywhere,” another said, “Digging processes are underway.”

“Keep searching,” Schlatt snapped. Tubbo and Fundy flinched at his raised tone. “I don’t want anyone leaving that place until Tommy is found, and Dream is dead.”

There were quick murmurs of agreement, and Tubbo rethought going to speak to Schlatt. He was clearly searching for Tommy, so...

Quackity hurried past them, holding some papers.

“They finished your speech,” Quackity said shortly, “Any luck?”

Schlatt sighed, running his fingers back through his hair and taking the speech from Quackity. “No,” he said through gritted teeth.

“We’ll find him,” Quackity promised.

“We’d better hope we do.” Schlatt scanned the room, and his eyes finally landed on Tubbo and Fundy, who were still standing at the entrance like fools.

“Oh,” Schlatt said, “Fundy delivered the news?”

Tubbo swallowed. Schlatt didn’t seem angry, more stressed than anything else, and he stepped into the room, Fundy following and closing the door behind them.

“I don’t believe it,” Tubbo said resolutely, “He isn’t dead.”

Schlatt snorted, a grim smile on his face as he dropped the speech down onto the table. “That’s what I’m hoping, kid.”

Schlatt really hated this.

Couldn’t they have one day, one day, without everything getting worse? Last night, Tommy ran away and got taken, and now Tommy was presumed *dead*.

Schlatt’s chest felt tight, and he took a swig of his coffee in an attempt to relieve the tenseness all of his body. His stomach churned, but he ignored it. It was just the stress getting to him.

And damn if he wasn’t stressed.

Schlatt was going to cling to the hope that Tommy wasn’t dead. They hadn’t found a body yet, so for all they know, Tommy was alive and well. Schlatt had seen how Tubbo had instantly concluded that Tommy had died upon seeing the pillar, even though the kid was alive. Schlatt knew that it could happen again.

But if Tommy was dead? Schlatt was never going to be able to live with himself. It was hard enough to live with himself as it was with Schlatt’s constant stream of past mistakes haunting him and everyone else at every turn.

But now Tommy might be dead. Tommy might be dead because of Schlatt’s mistakes. Schlatt had promised to make things better, and things couldn’t possibly be worse.

Quackity had handed him his speech, but Schlatt could barely read the words, his mind too focused on what could have happened to Tommy.

And now Tubbo and Fundy were here, Tubbo’s eyes full of hard determination, and Fundy’s with something slightly similar to hope.

Schlatt wasn’t surprised that Tubbo would refuse to instantly believe that Tommy was dead. Tubbo was too smart for that.

Tubbo and Fundy decided to stick around as Schlatt continued to receive updates for the next few hours. There was still no sign of Tommy, despite the amount of digging their scouts were doing. Where had Dream even put him? How much had he done to cover up the trail to Tommy?

And then there was Dream himself, who was getting closer and closer to being done with his respawn. The scouts *had* found his bed, but of course, there was no guarantee that it would be his actual respawn point. At this point, it was just a gamble, a guess.

And then, about two hours after the initial news, it finally happened.

“Sir! He’s respawned!”

Oh finally.

“Go for capture, but kill if necessary,” he commanded, even though they had already known that was the plan. There was just something about giving orders that helped Schlatt feel more in control of the situation, even though there wasn’t exactly much he could do from here.

It... it didn’t go well.

Dream killed all of them.

Somehow, despite the fact that he had just finished respawning, he still managed to kill all of them.

“Sir.” Someone who Schlatt couldn’t recall the name of was handing a communicator to him. “He wants to speak to you.”

Tubbo stiffened, and Schlatt took the communicator from where he was sitting.

“Dream,” Schlatt spat.

“Schlatt,” Dream said pleasantly, “I see you brought a welcoming committee.”

“Where’s Tommy?” Schlatt snarled, “What have you done to him?”

Dream laughed. “What have I done to him? I haven’t done anything to him.”

“Enough with the games.” Schlatt leaned forward, even though Dream wasn’t actually there. “Where is Tommy?”

“He’s dead,” Dream said, “Good luck finding him, I disposed of the body.”

“Yeah, and why should I believe you?” Schlatt snapped, “You’re a master manipulator.”

“Why would I lie about this?” Dream asked, “If he were alive, I’d be using him, not hiding him away and lying that he was dead.”

“I’ve seen you do it before,” Schlatt countered.

“Yeah, because I was looking for him, and I didn’t want entire search parties for the brat. I have nothing to gain from lying now.”

Schlatt wanted to crush this man into bits until the only thing that remained was the shards of his pathetic mask.

“When I get my hands on you—”

“That’s cute,” Dream said, “I just killed twenty of your scouts.”

And before Schlatt could even respond, Dream ended the call.

Schlatt roughly handed the communicator back to the person who gave it to him, and massaged his chest.

“What did he say?” Tubbo asked instantly, clutching onto the back of a chair, “Tommy—”

“Is probably still alive,” Schlatt muttered, “But Dream’s lying about it.”

Tubbo’s face fell. Clearly, he had been hoping that Dream would assure them that Tommy was still alive and that whatever exchange was going on was still on.

Schlatt understood. Without Dream confirming that Tommy was alive, there was this looming dread that maybe Dream wasn’t lying, maybe Tommy really was dead, maybe Dream really had dumped the kid’s corpse into a pile of lava.

Still, Schlatt refused to believe it. He couldn’t believe it.

Because if he believed it, if the body of the teenager that was already haunting his thoughts turned out to be reality, Schlatt wasn’t sure he’d be able to keep himself together.

Even now, Schlatt wanted a drink, so he quickly downed some more coffee, which only really worsened the aching in his chest.

There was a tired silence in the room, and Quackity started ordering people to figure out which of the scouts that had died were on their last life and which had respawned in Manberg.

Schlatt sunk into his chair, glancing back at the speech sitting on the table. He still had to give that this afternoon while George tried to execute the plan.

God, the plan. Was it even worth trying if Dream couldn’t even be killed instantly after respawn?

Then again, Dream didn’t kill all twenty of them at once. Only six were actually at the bed, which meant, unfortunately, that Dream had killed those searching for Tommy.

This time, there would be thirty men with their arrows trained at Dream, which would be much more difficult for Dream to counter, unless he had some trick up his sleeve, which he probably did.

Nothing could be easy, could it?

And then the hour had finally come, and Fundy, Quackity, Phil, and Tubbo had gotten up on the stage.

Phil wasn't originally going to be there, but Tubbo had seemed reluctant to get on the stage at all.

"I trust you," Tubbo said slowly, in a way that heavily implied he did not trust Schlatt, "But..."

Schlatt didn't exactly blame the kid. He did execute him on this very same stage.

"You don't have to come," Schlatt said, hoping to calm Tubbo down slightly.

Tubbo, however, shook his head firmly. "No," he said, "I need to be up there. I need to show the people that I'm no longer afraid of you."

"Mate, you're allowed to be afraid," Phil said, giving Schlatt a slightly nasty look.

Yeah, they had decided to work together, but Phil was clearly furious with Schlatt for letting Tommy get away, and he was much less willing to be optimistic of Tommy being alive.

"I've seen this before," Phil said, his voice sounding slightly distant, "People who cling onto any hope that their friend is alive just because they didn't find the body." Phil's eyes darkened. "Eventually, you just need to accept the truth."

So, yeah, Phil was doing surprisingly well for someone who believed that his son was dead, but Schlatt supposed that everybody processed grief differently.

In Phil's case, it was burning glares in Schlatt's direction and broken looks whenever he spoke to Tubbo or Fundy.

Schlatt didn't blame Philza for being angry with him; Schlatt was angry with *himself*.

He should've been better. He should've done more to protect Tommy, to keep him safe. He should've told the kid about the plan; he should've made sure that Tommy wasn't buying into any of the things that Dream had told him; he should've—

"I don't want to be afraid of you," Tubbo protested, bringing Schlatt back to the conversation, "You've changed, and I'm sick of feeling this way."

"You're perfectly allowed to not want to go up on that stage, kid," Schlatt said, "Are you sure you don't want to—"

"No," Tubbo said, his voice suddenly cold.

Clearly, there was going to be no compromising with Tubbo on this specific point.

Phil sighed. “Would you feel safer if I was up on stage with you?”

Tubbo hesitated, and Schlatt could tell that it probably *would* make the kid feel more at ease with the whole situation. It made sense, considering that Phil wasn’t there the day of the festival.

“Alright,” Schlatt agreed, “Phil, you go up there with him.”

So, with that arranged, Schlatt himself stepped up onto the stage, suddenly aware of the crowds of people that had flocked around to see the speech. Schlatt could spot a few signs out there, and most of them were not positive.

Well, George should be in position. Now it was time to see if Dream took the bait.

Schlatt took a deep breath and began speaking.

“Citizens of Manberg.

“As your president, I’ve been up here at this podium a few times before, addressing the citizens of this country. And um, well it’s been a wild ride.

“I’ve tried to work to improve this country, tried to bring Manberg to its full potential. But that’s not why we’re here, are we?”

George stood in the clearing, all too aware of the thirty scouts that all had invisibility on, their bows at the ready.

Dream had replied to his message requesting to meet, providing his own set of coordinates, which were fortunately not that far away from Manberg at all.

Dream always did like doing things on his own terms.

George still didn’t like any of this. Dream was his *friend*, and he was actively working to have him captured or even *killed*.

His stomach churned at the thought, and George tried to push it away. As long as everything went according to plan, Dream wasn’t going to die.

And if things didn’t go according to plan, then... George wouldn’t exactly blame Sapnap if he tried to kill him upon hearing the news.

But Dream had done horrible things, and George couldn’t allow it to continue. Tommy and Tubbo were kids, and Dream was playing with them like pieces on a chessboard. Dream had used *George* for one of his plans.

George clenched his fists, trying to calm the quacking in his chest. He needed to stay calm. He needed to act as if nothing were wrong so that Dream didn’t suspect something was awry.

Speaking of whom, George could now hear footsteps approaching, and he stiffened, looking in the direction of the sound.

Dream approached the clearing, wearing armor and holding a sword in his hand.

“Dream!” George said, hoping it sounded like a greeting and not a panicked shout.

George thought he could see Dream smile as he got closer, and George was split between smiling back and shuddering.

Dream just had to get to the center of the clearing. Just the center.

Dream stepped further into the clearing, and George sucked in a breath.

And suddenly, an arrow came whistling through the air, and Dream instantly dodged out of the way, not even looking surprised.

Dream rolled out of the way of more bolts and slammed his hand down on the ground.

George felt ice fill his chest when he heard the click of a button and the sound of TNT hissing.

But before George could do anything, a thundering sound grated against his ears and he was pushed forward with a sudden blast of heat.

“On October 17, which was yesterday, bystanders saw my Secretary of State and TommyInnit in the middle of an argument. And as I’m sure that many of you have already read in this morning’s newspapers, Mr. Innit said some concerning things about what has happened behind closed doors during my presidency.

“And a week ago, I would have vehemently denied those claims.”

Schlatt sighed.

“But this isn’t a week ago, is it?”

Tubbo held onto Phil’s hand tightly from where he sat, staring at Schlatt’s back as he continued to speak.

Two months ago, Tubbo would have told anyone they were pulling his leg for saying that Schlatt would stand up in front of a crowd and apologize for all of his crimes to the entire nation.

And yet there they were.

“I am sorry to confess that I am indeed guilty of all the crimes Mr. Innit has accused me of. I am an alcoholic, I have abused my staff, including the children, and I have unjustly punished those who took a stand against me.”

“And just because I’m trying to change does not mean I’m exempt from the law.

So, it is for this reason, I am resigning the Presidency effective noon tomorrow. Vice President Quackity will be taking my place in office. And I will be punished as the law sees just.”

Quackity tried to ignore the way his stomach tightened at the idea of him taking the presidency. He should be happy! This was all he had wanted from day one. He had *wanted* this power to help people, to change things, to make life in this country better for everyone.

But all he could think about was Schlatt.

George’s ears were ringing.

He could feel the stinging pain of burns all over his body, and he knew that even the scouts that had been on the outside edge of the blast like George had weren’t going to be able to stand a chance against Dream.

Speaking of whom...

“Future reference, George,” Dream’s voice floated above him, “Don’t let the person you’re trying to trap chose the meeting place.”

George’s head was swimming, but that didn’t stop him from downing a regen potion and shakily pulling himself to his feet.

There were a million things he could say. He could plead with Dream to stop. He could try to defend himself, saying that they weren’t sure Dream would agree to come at all if they had refused his demand. He could scream and shout and attempt to try and kill Dream himself.

But only one word came out.

“Why?”

Dream tilted his head at George before laughing.

“I need control,” Dream said simply.

George made a pained sound. “Why?!” he demanded, raising his voice.

“Look at this, George!” Dream shouted, gesturing to the bodies and moaning forms of the scouts that had been caught deeper into the explosion, “See what happens when people defy me? I was keeping everyone *safe!*”

Yeah, letting your friend get caught in an explosion didn’t sound safe. Cutting off another man’s arm didn’t sound *safe*. Hurting children didn’t sound *safe*.

This wasn't the Dream that George used to know.

"And this is safe?" George gestured to the people as well, pausing a moment to cough at the smoke. "Dream, you've hurt people!"

Dream's mouth was set into a thin line, and dodged an arrow that a still conscious scout tried to fire at him. "I do what I have to do to show people the consequences of trying to fight me."

"By what?" George demanded, "Going against the very thing you use to stand for?"

Dream didn't say anything, instead pulling a strange item out of his inventory.

"Do you know what this is?"

Dream tilted the object, which seemed to have some sort of button on it, in his hand as though he were examining an item at a museum, and George suddenly noticed that Dream was missing his middle and index finger.

When had that happened?

A question for another time.

George scowled. "I don't understand what that has to do with anything—"

Dream was smiling again. "It's connected to a bomb," he explained, sounding concerningly proud of himself.

"What bomb?" George asked, "Dream, what bomb—"

And Dream pressed the button.

Techno watched in the middle of the uncomfortably large crowd as the speech continued. So far, Schlatt had done a pretty good job, as far as he could tell, which was a compliment coming from him.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL EW. TAKING REPSONSABILITY, IN THIS WORLD? I GUESS MIRACLES DO EXIST.

Schlatt was moving onto the apology part of the speech now.

"I would like to apologize to each and every—"

And then an explosion engulfed the entire stage.

I'm in a rush so nothing to say here except that somehow this chapter was shorter than i expected but oh well originally there was going to be a ton more stuff in it and it got split into more chapters.

Thank you for reading, i hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3
please.

After that Math

Chapter Summary

Aftermath.

But not all of it because the author didn't have time.

Chapter Notes

tw: explosions, death, panic, referenced alcoholism, injury, fire, smoke, referenced suicidal thoughts

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It had happened far too slowly and far too quickly.

Phil had been watching as Schlatt continued to speak, doing fairly well, all things considered.

But Tubbo had been squeezing Phil's hand far too tightly, and Phil had been considering handing him the totem he still had in his inventory in the hopes that would make the traumatized teenager somewhat more comfortable in what was clearly a very uncomfortable situation.

"Would you like the totem?" Phil had whispered underneath his breath as Schlatt declared Quackity was next in line for presidency.

Tubbo shot him a startled look. "Totem?"

Phil pulled his totem of undying out of his inventory to show Tubbo; Schlatt was actually starting up on the apology part of the speech. "See, it can—"

Blinding pain gave way to his vision turning white.

And then Phil was standing in a small crater, the heat of flames surrounding him, the pain of his body having just been rapidly put back together coursing through Phil, and the broken remains of that totem in his hand.

No one else was standing up in the ruins. Instead, Phil squinted through the smoke to see Tubbo's body disappear, all of his items left behind on the ground.

Oh god.

Screams surrounded Techno, but for once, they weren't from his voices.

As a matter of fact, Techno couldn't hear the Chat at all through the painful ringing in his ears, although he was sure that they were screaming at the top of their lungs, demanding to know what had happened, to demand to know why everything was on fire, to demand that *blood be paid*—

But Techno couldn't hear Chat, and Phil was up on that stage.

And Phil only had one life left.

That was all that Techno needed to think before he was tearing through the crowd, pushing past the screaming onlookers who were all trying to get away from the explosion, trying to get to Phil.

Phil couldn't be dead. Techno *refused* to allow Phil to die.

That was a promise he had made himself the first time he met Phil, and it was *not* about to be a promise that Techno was going to break.

“Phil!” Techno shouted, smoke filling his lungs, “Phil!”

Technoblade stumbled into the crater that was once the stage, coughing. His eyes burned as he squinted for any sign of Phil's form.

Phil only had one life. Phil only had one life. Phil could be dead, and there was still so much that Techno wanted to say, wanted to do, that was his *father*—

“Techno!”

Techno's heart skipped a beat when he heard Phil's familiar voice in the wreckage, and he instantly shouted back.

“Phil! Phil, where are you?!”

Techno was already moving through the smoke again, avoiding the fire. In the distance, he could hear the harried commands of a crew coming to pour water on the fires that had started and rescue survivors, but Technoblade didn't care about any of that.

“I'm right here!” Phil called back, and Technoblade could see him running toward him.

“Oh my god, Phil,” Technoblade gasped out, coughing again as he sprinted to his father.

Techno grabbed Phil's shoulder, and he let out a pained breath of relief upon discovering that he wasn't a hallucination, that Phil was perfectly alive, although fresh scars littered his body, but that didn't matter because Phil was alive, and he wasn't leaving, and Technoblade hadn't failed him.

Technoblade had already failed so many people in his life; he didn't need to fail Phil too.

"I'm alright, mate," Phil said, although even Technoblade could tell that his voice was shaken, "You shouldn't have gone in here, it's dangerous."

"I'm a battle-hardened warrior," Techno retorted, coughing, "Damn it Phil, I thought you *died* —"

"But I didn't, I had a totem," Phil said, "I'm fine, okay? Let's get out of here."

Phil led Technoblade out of the explosion, and once the smoke thinned, Techno pulled out a potion to get rid of the smoke in his lungs. Phil must only be fine because of the boost that the totem gives someone after literally stopping death from coming knocking on their door.

It wasn't until they were safely out of the area, far away from the stage and even the screaming crowds when Technoblade's ears stopped ringing and Chat came filtering back into his hearing.

*Dadza, Dadza, Dadza. **HE LIVES.** Philza Minecraft is so bravveeeee. **Technotherapy?** Philzatherapy? **EVERYONE THERAPY.***

"Don't ever do that again," Techno said roughly to Phil, who was beginning to look drained. The effects of the totem must be wearing off.

"I'll try not to," he said tiredly, massaging his eyes, "Wow, that was certainly a mess, wasn't it?"

"How did this even happen?" Techno demanded, "Wasn't there a whole plan to *stop* Dream from doing anything like this?"

"Yeah, well, clearly that didn't work," Phil snorted. His eyes widened suddenly, and his wings flared out. "Oh my god, Tubbo. We need to get to him, oh my god, the poor kid."

*OOF. **TUBBOOM.** You aren't funny. **Boom.** SADNESS. **EXPLOSIONS.** DREAM WILL DIE TONIGHT.*

There was so much more that Techno wanted to say to Phil, but he knew that it could wait. Tubbo was probably going through hellish memories if he died from fireworks in the last timeline. The least Techno could do was to let Phil be by his side.

"You can go to him," Techno said.

Phil nodded. Techno thought it was going to be the end of that, but suddenly Phil was jumping on him, holding him in a tight embrace.

"Phil..." Techno said slowly, not entirely sure what to say.

*HUG. **HUGS.** MY NAME IS OLAF AND I LIKE WARM HUGS. **I AM SO HAPPY.***

“I’m glad you weren’t up there,” Phil admitted, separating himself from Techno, “I just... I can’t lose another son.”

Techno snorted. “Technoblade never dies,” he said, “Unless he chooses too.”

Phil made a pained expression. “Please don’t.”

Techno’s mind flashed to Wilbur, demanding to know why Techno hadn’t killed him, almost as though he had *hoped* Techno would kill him in the heat of his escape.

He swallowed.

“Right. I, uh, I won’t.”

When Schlatt woke up, the first thing he felt was severe disorientation.

What had happened again? He was having his speech, and then there was this explosion?

Oh, he had lost a life, hadn’t he?

There wasn’t really any time to waste, so Schlatt didn’t bother to lie around and contemplate the meaning of losing a life and how on earth this could have happened or even taking a moment of just enjoying existence instead of being a dead ghost that nobody could see, hear, or touch.

Instead, Schlatt tore out of bed and walked straight out of his bedroom, jumping in surprise when he saw that a few guards and a decent amount of staff were already waiting outside his door.

“Don’t worry,” Schlatt said automatically, “I’m alive. I’m getting to the bottom of this. Somebody try to find me a drink.”

That last part had slipped out unintentionally, and he quickly rectified it. “A non-alcoholic drink.”

Schlatt turned to the guard as he walked down the halls. Every step still felt strangely unreal and disorienting, but the idea of trying to relax after all this made Schlatt sick to his stomach, so he figured that some work would be better than nothing.

“Who’s hurt?” he asked one of his guards.

“Secretary Underscore, the Vice President, and the Archbishop are still respawning,” they replied, “No civilian casualties.”

“So, I was caught on the edge of the explosion,” Schlatt muttered, “That’s good, that’s good. How many are injured?”

“I don’t know, sir, but Mr. NotFound is currently recovering from injuries at the hospital.”

Oh, right, Schlatt had almost forgotten about poor George.

“I want to be told as soon as anyone is done respawning,” he commanded, “Do either of you have my communicator?”

Fortunately, one of the guards had managed to get their hands on his communicator, and Schlatt took it gratefully, already calling George to figure out what the heck had happened out there.

It took a couple of rings for George to pick up.

“Hi, Schlatt,” George’s voice came from the other line, sounding exhausted.

“So,” Schlatt said slowly, “Care to tell me what the hell happened?”

There was a pained laugh. “Yeah, well, Dream sort of rigged the meeting spot.”

Schlatt cursed, that seemed like such an obvious thing for Dream to do, but even from the beginning Schlatt had known this plan was going to be a long-shot. As a matter of fact, it was doomed from the start.

Still, it hurt to know that it had failed so dismally that the meeting place was even a weapon.

“And then he had this button connected to this bomb?” George continued, “He didn’t explain it, he just pushed it, and—”

“Yeah, everything exploded,” Schlatt finished for him impatiently, “Well, I hope you’re not *too* injured—”

“I’m alright.”

“Please tell me you at least got *something* that we can use against Dream?”

“Um, he said he wanted control, and that to not let him choose the meeting place in the future, but that was somewhat a given,” George said stumblingly, “Sorry, but you know Dream.”

“Unfortunately,” Schlatt said shortly, “Alright, get well, talk to you later.”

“Bye.”

Schlatt hung up and turned to his office, already dialing a new number.

This time, the call was answered almost instantly.

“Sam, please tell me that that small bomb you created for Dream wasn’t connected to some button device,” Schlatt said instantly, sliding behind his office chair and trying to pretend that none of this had happened.

There was a hesitation on the other side of the line before Sam finally said, “Yeah, there was.”

Schlatt swore. “Why would you give Dream such a powerful weapon?” he demanded.

“I didn’t know any better,” Sam snapped back, “Listen, Dream hasn’t even been *in* Manberg for at least a week. How could he even have gotten the bomb into the place?”

Schlatt laughed. “He got someone else to do it for him, obviously.”

“So you think there was a traitor on that stage,” Sam deduced, and Schlatt jumped when the door to his office opened, revealing Sam in the flesh.

They both hung up their communicators, and Schlatt frowned at Sam, surveying him.

It was clear that stress was getting to him. There were dark bags hanging underneath his eyes, and his green hair was even less tidy than usual.

“I don’t, actually,” Schlatt replied.

Schlatt needed to trust his allies. If he went around worrying that everyone was a traitor, it would only cause more discourse and division, which Schlatt had a feeling was exactly what Dream wanted.

“Well, how else do you suggest that bomb got there?” Sam asked darkly, crossing his arms.

“I don’t know,” Schlatt admitted, “But none of them have any reason to betray Manberg at the moment, especially during an apology and resignation speech. My guess is that whoever brought it in didn’t realize they had it.”

“The bulk of the explosion was where Philza and Tubbo were sitting,” Sam said, “I heard investigators talk about it.”

Schlatt put his head in his hands, because of course it just had to be Philza and Tubbo that were closest to the incredibly deadly and powerful blast made by one of Sam’s mini bombs.

Prime, Tubbo was never going to be able to stand up on a stage again after this.

“So, you’re saying either Tubbo or Phil had the bomb,” Schlatt muttered, “It was probably Phil, he was in Dream’s custody earlier.” He took his head out of his hands and looked up at Sam. “Speaking of Phil, where is he?”

Sam frowned. “I think he’s waiting for Tubbo to respawn,” he said, “His scars look somewhat... different... from most burn scars, though.”

Nothing could ever be simple.

“That’s not ominous at all.”

Sam sighed. “You’re just going to have to see for yourself.”

Well, Schlatt supposed it wouldn't kill him to go ahead and speak to Philza over what the hell had just happened, especially if they could get to the bottom of exactly *how* this happened so they could stop it from every happening again.

"I hope you learned your lesson about giving Dream deadly weapons," Schlatt said scathingly as he pulled himself out of his chair.

Sam grimaced. "Yeah," he said, "I think I have."

Chapter End Notes

I'm back!

Sorry for taking so long, I was gonna write the Dream interlude but it wasn't working for me so i'm gonna try again later.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

Unite Against a Green Boy

Chapter Summary

Tubbo shouts but it actually leads to good realizations and communication.

Chapter Notes

tw: implied/referenced child abuse, referenced death, scars, burns, referenced explosions, threats, punch, shouting, arguing, referenced captivity, ptsd,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo woke up to the sound of arguing overhead.

“You think *I* intentionally blew up that stage?”

“I just think it’s pretty suspicious that you were pulling out that totem *just* as everything went boom.”

“Quackity—”

“*No*, Schlatt. You’re not seriously going to let him go?”

What had happened again? Schlatt was giving a speech, right? And Tubbo was scared, so Phil had offered the totem? What had happened after that?

Someone, Phil maybe, had mentioned the stage blowing up. Had the stage exploded? Tubbo did recall pain before everything stopped.

Tubbo slowly opened his eyes, wincing at the sudden light. The others had continued arguing, Technoblade’s voice joining the fray as he defended Phil’s honor or whatever. Tubbo waited for his vision to clear before he said anything, getting the strangest feeling of déjà vu as he saw Quackity looking like he wanted to drive a sword through Phil there and then.

“What happened?” Tubbo asked, pleasantly surprised to find that his voice wasn’t actually all that hoarse and scratchy, just mildly tired-sounding.

The arguing stopped immediately, everybody snapping their attention over to Tubbo.

“You’re awake!” Phil exclaimed, relief evident in his voice, “How are you feeling?”

Tubbo yawned. “Tired,” he said honestly. Respawn had the unfortunate habit of making Tubbo sleepier than he’d prefer to be, and he sat up to combat the feeling. “What happened?”

Quackity, who was standing next to Schlatt a few feet away from Tubbo’s bed, crossed his arms and scowled. “*Phil* brought a freaking bomb onto the stage.”

“You make it sound like he did it on purpose,” Technoblade snapped, his hand firmly on Phil’s shoulder, “Do you really think he wanted to be carrying a lethal weapon?”

“He had a totem at the exact moment, why else would he use it?”

“That’s hardly any evidence!”

Tubbo’s vision flicked over to Schlatt, who was massaging his face like he had a massive headache coming on. Who knows, maybe he did. All Tubbo knew was that he saw newly-healed burn scars on Schlatt’s exposed skin, as well as the scars on Quackity and Fundy.

Glancing over at Phil, Tubbo saw that his scars didn’t exactly seem... well... external. It was impossible to explain, but it almost looked as though Phil had been stitched back together like the blanket that a wild-cat had ripped to pieces and Tommy had tried to repair.

Why did Phil’s scars look so different from the others? Was it because of the totem?

And if Quackity and Schlatt had burn scars, that could only mean...

Tubbo instantly leaped out of the bed, ignoring how his legs were slightly unstable after having just respawned. Ignoring the startled cries of the others, he sprinted across the room and yanked the door to the adjacent bathroom open, rushing in front of the mirror.

Tubbo’s face was littered with burn scars.

They were different. They were different scars than the ones that Tubbo had received thanks to the combined efforts of Schlatt and Technoblade.

And yet they were horrifically the same. Different reasons. Different scar. Different cause.

Same stage. Same face. Same life lost.

It wasn’t Technoblade, but it was *Phil*, someone Tubbo had trusted to protect him from Schlatt, the person he didn’t trust, the person Tubbo had never truly trusted, even as he stood up on that stage to apologize for all of the crap he had put Tubbo through.

Tubbo had tried so hard to make this a reality where things were different, where things were *better*. And yet, here he was, staring at burns scars, down to one life, with people he cared about arguing over whose fault it was. Now all he needed was for Schlatt to propose they fight in a pit and it will all come full circle.

It wasn’t *fair*. Why couldn’t things just work out the way they were supposed to? Was Tubbo just doomed to live this sort of life, never truly free from the suffering?

Tubbo felt his blood chill ever so slightly when he saw Schlatt's reflection enter the room, his face probably grimmer than he had ever seen it.

Which... was honestly saying a lot.

"Kid..." Schlatt began quietly.

Tubbo gritted his teeth, glaring at the mirror as he held onto the vanity so tightly that his knuckles were turning white. "What?"

There was a heavy silence for a moment, and Tubbo knew that Quackity, Phil, Fundy, and Technoblade were all watching from the other room.

Tubbo held his breath as Schlatt opened his mouth to speak.

"I'm sorry."

Sorry wasn't good enough. Sorry was never good enough. Actions spoke louder than words, and the only actions that Tubbo had seen ever since he returned to this time was suffering that built up and up and *up*.

"You keep saying that," Tubbo hissed, not taking his eyes off of the mirror, "Schlatt, you keep *apologizing*. And what good has it done? You apologize to Tommy, and he still runs off to Dream. You apologize to the world, and yet that stage still explodes. You apologize to *me*, but that doesn't just *erase* what's happened in the past! Or even what's going to happen in the future, apparently!"

Instead of growing angry, Schlatt's expression just became more broken, as if he were too tired to actually try and defend himself.

"I know."

And for whatever reason, Tubbo spun around and punched Schlatt square in the face, causing Schlatt to stumble back slightly and bring his hand to a soon to be bruised part of his face.

"If you know, why does it keep on happening?!" Tubbo demanded, "You say you're sorry, you say you're going to try to change things, and yet *nothing* is different."

Out of the corner of his eyes, Tubbo could see Phil, Techno, Quackity, and Fundy all gathered near the door, but Tubbo ignored them, keeping his eyes set firmly on Schlatt.

"It's like we're in an endless cycle!" Tubbo continued, almost hysterically, "A cycle where I die on that stage, and you die to whatever unhealthy thing you're putting through your system, and everyone's divided, and Dream *wins*, because we were all too stupid to figure out how to get anything done."

"Mate—"

"No, Phil!" Tubbo shouted, "Maybe you haven't been paying enough attention, because that's all you've ever been good at doing, but nothing is changing! Even in this new timeline

we're trying to forge for ourselves, we keep repeating the same things over and over again!"

Tubbo began pacing around the room, his heart hammering against his chest somewhat erratically as it was getting harder and harder to take deep breaths.

"Tommy is stuck with Wilbur, I go to save him, I get taken captive, we both get rescued and Technoblade gets taken captive, Phil goes to save him, Phil gets taken captive, Tommy goes to save them and gets taken captive himself while Technoblade and Phil find their own way out. I yell at Schlatt a few times because I pent up all of my emotions until critical moments like these. And now we're back at the beginning, because I fully intend on rescuing Tommy if it kills me—"

"Tommy is *dead*," Phil snapped.

"No, he's not!" Tubbo practically screamed at the top of his lungs, "This is what I'm saying! Nothing is changing! Dream tells us that Tommy is dead and we just *believe* him, giving him the opportunity to have Tommy all to himself!"

Tubbo stopped to catch his breath, his vision blurring slightly, and he leaned against the wall to compose himself.

There was a stunned silence for a moment before Quackity finally said, somewhat half-heartedly, "Surely there are *some* things that have changed?"

"Yeah, I still had both of my arms and all three of my lives," Technoblade snarked.

"Okay, that's not exactly what I had in mind," Quackity said, frowning slightly. His eyes brightened. "What about Schlatt? He's changed."

"Fine," Tubbo conceded, "I would be the first to agree that Schlatt is making a solid effort to become a better person, but that doesn't change the fact that all of the events are playing out very similarly, regardless of who takes what role."

Phil whispered something Tubbo couldn't make out underneath his breath.

"What was that?" Technoblade asked.

Phil straightened slightly, his wings fluffing up behind him. "Wilbur didn't die," he said, his voice quiet but bold, "You said I killed him in the last timeline."

Tubbo swallowed and nodded. "Yeah, but—"

"Well, he asked me to kill him earlier; he put the sword into my *hand*," Phil continued, his voice choked, "And I didn't. That has to count for something, right?"

That didn't just count for something. That was *huge*.

"Oh," Tubbo said, unsure of what to say.

“Great!” Quackity said, gesturing at Phil, “That means the cycle can break! Phil didn’t choose to kill his son even though he had done horrible things...” Quackity narrowed his eyes at Phil, and his voice suddenly turned to one of suspicion. “Wait, are you and Wilbur working together? Was Wilbur in on this?”

Techno pulled an axe out of his inventory, and Tubbo took a small step away from him.

“I’m only saying this once,” Technoblade said, “Phil isn’t responsible, so stay the hell away from him.”

Quackity opened his mouth to angrily respond, but Schlatt was the one to interrupt them.

“Quackity,” he said, his voice both tired and stern, “Phil has no reason to work with Dream, and it was already confirmed that Wilbur took his second life.”

Quackity scowled. “Then explain what just happened.”

“Like I tried to tell you while we were waiting for Tubbo to respawn, Dream probably planted the bomb on him,” Schlatt explained, “I already discussed this with Sam.”

“Don’t you think Phil would have noticed if there was a tiny little bomb on him?” Fundy asked, his voice doubtful.

“Hate to state the obvious, but Dream must’ve put it somewhere I didn’t notice,” Phil said.

“Yeah, like that’s a perfectly acceptable explanation—”

Quackity was interrupted by Technoblade pointing his axe at him, and then Fundy was pulling out a crossbow and pointing at Technoblade, which brought Phil to point his sword at Fundy, and Tubbo instinctively found himself reaching into his inventory for his own weapon before he realized that there was nothing there.

Schlatt, however, raised his hands in a halting position. “Guys, stop.”

“And remind me why I should listen to you?” Technoblade asked, “Cause the kid has a point, you know.”

Tubbo watched as Schlatt lowered his hands and sighed. “Because I know that this exactly what Dream wants.”

Phil narrowed his eyes at Schlatt. “What do you mean?” he asked, now his voice laced with suspicion.

“Dream wants us to fight each other,” Schlatt explained, “He wants us to weaken ourselves from the inside. Because it is much easier to defeat a scattered army than an actually united force.”

Tubbo’s eyes widened, and his mind instantly flashed to the way that Dream intentionally turned him and Tommy against each other, the way that Dream encouraged the animosity between L’manberg and Technoblade, even though it made things so much worse.

The others looked doubtful, but they were at least lowering their weapons, so that was something, at the very least.

“Think about it.” Schlatt looked over at Phil. “He captured you because you were alone. Tommy only went to him *after* I screwed up and betrayed his trust.” Tubbo did not fail to notice how Schlatt had left out Tubbo in that event. “And now he’s trying to make us all turn against each other by planting a bomb on Philza.”

And there was one that Schlatt didn’t know about. The deal Tubbo made with Dream to exchange his freedom for Tommy’s sake.

To Tubbo’s surprise, Technoblade was the first one to put his weapon in his inventory. “That does sound like him,” he grunted, “You should’ve heard him while he was talking to Tommy on the phone.”

Tubbo’s stomach churned, partly out of worry for Tommy and partly out of his own anxiety concerning his own phone call with Dream. “You heard that?”

Technoblade glared at the wall. “Yeah, it wasn’t exactly what I’d call pleasant.”

Fundy sighed and put his own weapon away. “So, what I’m getting from this is that in order to break this cycle or whatever, we have to use the power of teamwork.”

Tubbo snorted. “There’s no way it’s that easy, or we would have beaten Dream a long time ago.”

“Well, it couldn’t hurt to not be killing each other,” Phil said, giving Quackity a pointed glare.

Quackity opened his mouth, probably to make some smart comment, but then he sighed, visibly deflating. “You’re probably right.”

“Alright,” Technoblade said, resting his hand on his hip, “Step one completed. We’re not killing each other. Happy?”

“Well, I think happy would be strong,” Schlatt admitted, “But thank you.”

Technoblade rolled his eyes.

“So now what?” Fundy asked, “If the power of teamwork is too easy, what are we supposed to do?”

Tubbo thought back to what Phil had said about choosing not to kill Wilbur, even though Wilbur had thrust the sword into his hands, even though a different Phil hadn’t been strong enough to say no.

“I think...” Tubbo began slowly, “I think we have to do what we normally wouldn’t. Like, um—” Tubbo took a deep breath, turning to Schlatt. “I made a deal with Dream to sacrifice my freedom for Tommy’s.”

Schlatt's jaw dropped. "You didn't."

"I did," Tubbo said, swallowing the lump that came to his throat, "I was pushed into a corner, and nobody was there to help me, so I tried to figure it out myself, but we were talking about teamwork and doing what we wouldn't normally do and all that, so..."

"Oh god," Phil muttered from behind Tubbo.

Tubbo braced for Schlatt to shout or at least give him some disappointed lecture on how Tubbo needed to tell him those sorts of things.

However, Schlatt actually mustered a grim smile. "Thank you, Tubbo. Now, at least, we have a better idea of what Dream's planning, although it makes me sick to think that you were in that position."

Tubbo clenched his fists tightly and looked away, giving Schlatt a short nod.

Fundy cleared his throat, and Tubbo turned to face him. "So, if we're trying new things, then I want to see, uh, Wilbur," he said slowly, "Um, besides, who would know more about Dream than the one who's been working for him this entire time?"

Phil's eyes widened. "And then maybe he could explain how Dream got a bomb on me," he added.

"Well, I guess we have a plan, then," Quackity said, "Hopefully, it will prove Phil's innocence."

Tubbo glanced over at Technoblade, half-expecting him to snap at Quackity for that comment. However, Technoblade met eyes with Tubbo and gave him a small nod before looking at Schlatt.

"Good to see that your cabinet isn't made up of complete morons."

And with that, Technoblade spun around and left the room, Phil quickly following behind him.

Schlatt let out a breath before turning to Tubbo. "You know, you have a good punch."

Tubbo's eyes landed on the blossoming bruise on Schlatt's face and managed the tiniest of smiles. "Yeah, I guess I do."

Chapter End Notes

And with that we are officially out of the darkest hour.

I can't remember if i've said this before but if I did I lied now we are out. (with the exception of tommy but give me time)

Anyway, thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments.
<3

Wilbur is in the next chapter.

Jailbur

Chapter Summary

Wilbur is vibing in prison.

Oh look his son and tubbo are visiting now.

Chapter Notes

tw: prison system that is probably somewhat inaccurate, suicidal thoughts, implied/referenced child abuse, referenced manipulation, abandonment issues, broken family relationships, scars

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur was sitting in a bare prison cell.

As soon as they had gotten back to Manberg, Schlatt's scouts had taken him straight to Manberg's prison.

Wilbur felt a bit bitter when he thought about the fact that there was a time when these scouts used to be under *his* command, but it hardly mattered now. Nothing did. As a matter of fact, nothing even made *sense* anymore.

Tommy was dead. His baby brother, the light of his life, the only person who had made life worth living, was gone. Wilbur would never get to see him laugh, or ruffle his fluffy blond hair, or curl up close to him at night.

But Phil had refused to kill him, and when Wilbur had tried to kill Phil, the only thing he could think of was his welcoming face the first time he had woken up at his house.

"I love you. I love you so much."

It wasn't fair. Wilbur had known what he wanted; he had known what he needed to do; he had everything under *control*.

And then Techno refused to kill him, and Phil had refused to kill him, and Dream had been lying to him after all, which meant that Phil and Technoblade were telling the truth, and if that was true, what else were they telling the truth about?

It just... Wilbur didn't know what to think, and it was exhausting.

He just wanted to hold Tommy close and pretend that the world made sense again, that Wilbur still lived in a world where everyone had left him and Tommy was the only one who would stay.

Then again, Phil didn't exactly follow Wilbur into prison, and Wilbur clung onto that for dear life. Phil hadn't stayed completely, even if he had promised to try and help with the trial.

Wilbur didn't want a trial. Schlatt would probably chop off his head anyway, and even if Wilbur was graced with a trial, he didn't want to win. Not even Phil could stop Wilbur from dying if it was a sentence from a legal trial.

But then again, Phil had been willing to die just to stop Wilbur from dying.

The thought was so absurd that Wilbur couldn't help but to laugh, the sound echoing slightly in the empty room.

The scouts had apparently gathered enough to know that Wilbur wanted desperately to die. They made Wilbur change into clothes he couldn't choke himself with and brought him to this empty cell because Schlatt apparently couldn't even let Wilbur have this *one thing*.

Schlatt was probably laughing at finally having Wilbur in his clutches. Wilbur snarled at the thought and tugged his hair in frustration.

He just wanted to see Tommy again. He didn't care about the rest. He just wanted to see Tommy.

And then the door swung open, and Wilbur snapped his head up to see one of the prison guards holding a pair of cuffs.

"You have visitors," they said shortly.

Wonderful. Wilbur had been in this prison for only half a day and he was already about to get interrogated.

As the guard cuffed him and led him down the hall to wherever the 'meeting room' was, Wilbur wondered what torture methods Schlatt would use. There would probably be a knife involved, and Wilbur wouldn't be surprised if Schlatt would use some waterboarding.

Wilbur just hoped that something would go wrong, maybe somebody would be merciful enough to take it too far, and Wilbur could finally reunite with Tommy in death.

They stopped to search Wilbur, like Wilbur had the time to get his hands on contraband in the course of three or four hours. Wilbur didn't bother to say that, though. Instead, he just duly went through the motions.

When did the once great Wilbur Soot get degraded to *this*?

Wilbur took a deep breath. This wasn't his fault. This was the fault of Phil, and Techno, and Schlatt, and anyone who left or betrayed him.

The thought filled him with less fire than it used to. As a matter of fact, it almost sounded weak, like back in that time that Wilbur had insisted that his parents were coming back to him.

Dream's words from that morning echoed in Wilbur's head.

"I didn't do anything you hadn't already done to him."

Wilbur hadn't done anything to Tommy. He was just making sure that Tommy didn't leave him behind, that Tommy stayed by his side. Wilbur hadn't tried to *break* him. Wilbur didn't want that. He just wanted *Tommy*.

"But I thought you liked the change in Tommy. Isn't he so much more fun when submissive?"

Wilbur gritted his teeth. If not Phil, Techno, or even Schlatt, at least a great amount of the blame for Tommy's death could be casted on Dream.

Wilbur was a fool to think that he had ever been on his side.

The search was completed, and Wilbur was led to an empty room with a table with three chairs sitting around it, one on one side of the table and two on the other.

Wilbur was led to the chair sitting by itself, and his handcuffs were attached to the table, as if they were concerned Wilbur would try to escape or attack someone if he weren't firmly chained up like some sort of dog.

And then the door opened, and it *wasn't* Schlatt who entered the room.

Instead, Fundy and Tubbo were the ones to walk into the room, and they did not look like they did the last time Wilbur had seen them.

Before, they didn't have burn scars all over their bodies.

Wilbur ignored the way his chest seized upon seeing his son with those scars, because Fundy wasn't Wilbur's son anymore. Fundy had disowned him; Wilbur didn't owe him anything.

In an attempt to distract himself, Wilbur looked over to Tubbo, who wasn't wearing that shameful suit, instead wearing that green shirt that Wilbur was used to seeing him in.

Memories of Tommy and Tubbo playing came filtering in, but Wilbur pushed them away.

Tubbo was working for *Schlatt*. And to make matters worse, Dream had told Wilbur that Tubbo had *exiled* Tommy, leaving his baby brother in Dream's sick hands while Tubbo was probably enjoying his presidency, not giving a care for the best friend he had just forsaken.

Wilbur might want to die, but that didn't mean he didn't have at least a little bit of anger left to spare on the person who contributed to Tommy's death.

"I like your scars," Wilbur said. He smiled, the sweetness in his voice dripping with fury like hot acid. "They suit you."

Tubbo's entire body flinched back at the comment, and Wilbur took immense satisfaction in it.

"Leave Tubbo alone," Fundy snapped.

Wilbur struggled to keep the grin on his face when he returned his attention to Fundy. Whenever Wilbur saw him, he could only feel bitterness. Wilbur had given the world to Fundy only for him to throw it away.

"And why should I?" Wilbur asked, raising an eyebrow. He looked back over to Tubbo, snarling. "My baby brother is *dead* because of you—"

"That's not true!" Fundy protested.

"I'm not talking to you currently," Wilbur said coldly, "I am speaking to the monster who exiled my brother and left him to *Dream*."

Fundy didn't say anything, looking shocked. Tubbo, on the other hand, sat up straighter, as though he were ready to rehearse something.

"You're right," Tubbo said, "I did exile Tommy, and I will likely regret that to my dying day."

Tubbo leaned forward, looking Wilbur dead in the eyes, and cliché as it might sound, Wilbur felt as though Tubbo was staring into the depths of his soul. Wilbur forced himself not to look intimidated, instead smiling, as though challenging Tubbo to try and sift through the amount of pain Wilbur's soul could carry.

"But I apologized to Tommy," Tubbo said, his voice a deadly calm, "I admitted that I was wrong, and I apologized. What about you, Wilbur Soot? If you were to see Tommy, would you admit that what you did to him was cruel and wrong? Or would you prefer to live in your fantasy where you're the only victim in a world full of victims and that you yourself can do no wrong?"

Maybe the words struck a chord somewhere, maybe they rang so loudly in Wilbur's mind that he wanted to scream to drown it out.

And maybe that just made Wilbur angrier.

"Tommy is *dead*," Wilbur spat, "And—"

"I personally believe that Tommy isn't dead," Tubbo interrupted, "Considering that Dream does nothing but lie and there is no reason for him to stop. But even saying that he is dead, pretend that Tommy has come back as a ghost or that you're dead and he's standing in front of you. Would you apologize? Would you continue on like you always have?"

If Wilbur were to see Tommy again, he'd probably hug him and never let go. He'd certainly whisper apologies, but over his own foolishness to trust Dream, over his failure to keep Tommy safe.

That's all there was to apologize for.

“You’ve been hurting him, Wilbur!” “I didn’t do anything you hadn’t already done to him.” “If you were to see Tommy, would you admit that what you did to him was cruel and wrong?”

Wilbur didn’t say anything, just glaring coolly at Tubbo.

“Anyway, I doubt it would make much difference to you, but Dream was pressuring me into the decision, so it wasn’t as though I woke up one day and decided to exile Tommy like Schlatt may have.”

Wilbur glared at the mention of that ram, and both Tubbo and Fundy winced.

“Anyway,” Fundy said, “We’ve actually come to talk about things that aren’t future scenarios that have technically never happened in this timeline.”

Wilbur let out a bitter laugh. “Oh, so now I’m worth your time,” he said, “Now that I’m so conveniently in prison, you come rushing back.”

Tubbo sucked in a breath, and Fundy’s expression hardened.

“You know what, *Dad?*” Wilbur started at being addressed that way. “You are worth my time. Or, at the very least, I want to make you worth my time.”

“And what, might I ask, is that supposed to mean?” Wilbur asked curtly.

Fundy sighed. “I was always on your side,” he said, “I was spying on Schlatt, you know. But then Schlatt gave me the one thing you never did.”

“And what is that?”

“Validation, acceptance, approval, *attention*,” Fundy listed, as though Wilbur hadn’t given him those things.

“I did—”

“You didn’t,” Fundy snapped, “You keep focusing your attention on Tommy. Heck, even Tubbo was treated with more respect than me!”

Wilbur tightened his hands into fists, gritting his teeth angrily. “You think I didn’t love you?” he demanded, “All I wanted was to keep you *safe*.”

“By treating me like an incapable child?” Fundy demanded, “Tommy’s a child too, but at least you gave him positions of responsibility!”

“You were too young—”

“And Tommy wasn’t?”

“You were the one who abandoned *me*.”

Fundy rolled his eyes. “Oh please, you had left me behind long before I left you, even if you didn’t notice.”

Wilbur laughed bitterly. “Well, it’s too late now, isn’t it?”

It didn’t matter if Wilbur had failed as much as Phil had as a father. Nothing much mattered, actually. All Wilbur wanted to do was die, and there was no point in trying to mend relationships in the process.

Fundy looked as though he wanted to say more, but when he next spoke, it was about another subject entirely.

“Anyway,” Fundy said, clearing his throat, “Um, we want your help. On, um, defeating Dream.”

Wilbur raised his eyebrows. “Oh?” he asked, perking up slightly. He would love nothing more than to get revenge on the man, even if it meant working with his enemies. “How so?”

Tubbo sighed. “Well, we were hoping you could tell us,” he said, “Dream’s been stringing us along this entire time. We need a way to catch *him* off guard for once.”

Wilbur remembered when he had managed to stab Dream through with a sword, take off two of his fingers, and then stab his chest with a knife.

“And what do I gain from telling you?”

Fundy scowled. “Seriously?”

Tubbo’s expression, however, didn’t waver. “An opportunity to see Tommy again,” he said, “When he’s ready and you’ve got your head on straight.”

Wilbur couldn’t breathe.

An opportunity to see Tommy again... that was worth quite a lot. And even though it sounded like Tubbo was saying in life, Wilbur knew that Tommy was dead, that Dream wasn’t lying. It was like Dream said, there was nothing for Dream to gain from that particular lie.

And that meant that once Tubbo and the others found the body, they would finally let Wilbur die. He could finally see Tommy again.

And as loath as Wilbur was to admit it, this might be the only time that Schlatt would give him such an opening, assuming he didn’t go back on his word later.

At the very least, Dream might get punished.

“Fine,” Wilbur sighed and leaned forward with a grin. “The trick to manipulating Dream is to make him think he’s successfully manipulating *you*. ”

Chapter End Notes

The prison is probably somewhat inaccurate. I did research. So sorry if it's not perfect lol I wasn't trying to be super thorough so <3

Anyway, perhaps there is hope for the future of Wilbur and Fundy? Who knows....

Also sorry for shorter chapters recently.

Also yes Wilbur will be getting proper therapy later.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

Food Finally

Chapter Summary

Spoiler alert: Tommy isn't dead.

Chapter Notes

tw: child abuse, manipulation, ptsd, referenced amputation, starvation, nightmares

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Tommy was six, he had challenged Technoblade to a sword fight.

Of course, considering that Tommy was six and Technoblade was a teenage warrior, it didn't work out for him as well as it could've, and the fight ended with Tommy falling to the ground with a painful thump.

It could've ended much worse, but six-year-old Tommy didn't see it that way, and his eyes filled with tears.

He had just wanted to beat Techno. He had just wanted to show Techno that he was strong enough to do things with him. Techno spent so much time fighting with swords with Phil, and Tommy just wanted to be big enough to fight with them.

But Tommy didn't know how to explain that, so he just cried.

Wilbur and Phil weren't at home; they had gone to town to buy Wilbur some new guitar strings, which meant that Techno was all alone in dealing with a sobbing Tommy.

And even Tommy had known that Techno was *not* good at dealing with tears.

"I'm sorry!" Tommy wailed, trying to cover his wet face with his hands. This was so embarrassing. He was trying to show Techno that he was big and strong and now he was just blubbering like a stupid baby.

Wearing a pained expression, Techno had crouched down in front of Tommy. "Are you alright?" he asked.

Tommy took deep breaths, but they were more like loud gasps. "I'm fine," he sniffed, "I'm a big man."

Tommy wished he could stop crying, but for some reason, he couldn't stop. Now Techno was going to hate him and they would never speak together again, and—

Technoblade patted his hair, and Tommy froze, staring up at his older brother with wide eyes.

"There, there," Techno said, slowly moving his hand away. Tommy saw his cheeks get slightly pinker than their normal hue. "Sorry if that was weird. I'm not very good at this."

Tommy was in shock. Techno really *wasn't* good at this. Normally, Wilbur would give him a hug or make sure he was alright... not pat his head slowly.

In spite of himself, Tommy let out a watery giggle.

Techno only seemed more confused at that, and Tommy laughed all the more.

"Did it work?" Techno asked.

Tommy shook his head, bringing his hands up to wipe the tears away from his eyes. "You're bad at this."

Techno huffed. "Sorry."

"I guess I'll just have to teach you," Tommy decided, sitting up slightly and doing one last sniff.

Techno looked surprised. "Teach me?"

Tommy nodded. "Yep!"

Now Tommy just had to decide what he should teach Techno how to do first. Normally, when Tommy got hurt, Wilbur made sure he was alright, but Techno had already sort of done that.

"You have to hug me," Tommy decided.

"What?"

Tommy crossed his arms, sticking his nose up in the air so that he could seem extra in charge. "The rules say that you have to hug me."

In all honesty, Tommy expected Techno to reject Tommy's command, telling him that he wasn't good at hugs or something like that.

But to Tommy's surprise, Techno sighed and awkwardly wrapped his arms around Tommy, pulling him close to his chest.

Oh.

Tommy wasn't sure he had ever really gotten hugged by Techno before, but this was very nice. Techno smelled a bit like sweat and dirt, which might be gross, but Tommy didn't mind.

It was nice to be hugged by Techno in simultaneously the same yet different way than he was hugged by Wilbur.

Tommy held tightly onto Techno's shirt, like if he didn't hold on tightly enough, Techno would let go, and Tommy would lose him forever.

After a few minutes of the hug, Techno spoke. "Okay, what now?"

Tommy deliberated. Techno seemed to be willing to do whatever Tommy said, so he could really take advantage of this situation to get Techno to let him do whatever he wanted.

"I want to braid your hair," Tommy decided.

"What?"

"I want to braid your hair," Tommy said again, frowning slightly.

"Child, do you even know how to braid hair?"

Tommy made a face, slightly offended. "Of course, I do," he said, "Daddy taught me."

Techno let out a snorting noise. "Ah, so you were the one who gave him that awful braid yesterday."

"It was not awful!" Tommy protested, tears springing to his eyes again, "It was the best braid ever!"

Techno rubbed Tommy's back. "Okay, okay, it was the best braid ever. Please stop crying, you can braid my hair."

Tommy grinned, and he instantly scrambled out of Techno's embrace and walked around him to his back, where his long, pink hair was already tied into an intricate braid.

Tommy frowned. He probably couldn't make his braid that fancy.

But that was okay, because his braid would be *way* better.

Techno grunted every so often when Tommy pulled at the hair too hard, but Tommy thought it was fairly safe to say that he was the best braider out there. When he was done, he tied the hairband around the bottom of the braid and let it rest against Techno's back.

"Done!" Tommy declared, "Now you have the best braid ever."

"I'm sure I do," Techno said dryly, standing up, "Come on, let's go back inside."

And suddenly, Techno and Phil were leaving, and ten-year-old Tommy sprinted up to them, grabbing onto Techno's sleeve.

"Please don't leave," he begged, "Please don't leave. I promise I'll be good."

Techno sighed, ruffling Tommy's hair instead of patting his head awkwardly. "It's not because of you, kid. It's on me."

Now Tommy was standing in the depths of Pogtopia, Wilbur towering over Tommy more than should be possible.

"Why do you think they left, Tommy?" Wilbur demanded, grabbing Tommy so tightly by the shoulder that his fingers felt like claws, "They didn't care about you; they didn't *want* you." Wilbur's face melted into a smile. "But I do—"

Wilbur morphed into Dream, his mask splattered with someone's blood. "—I want you. You just have to behave."

Tommy let out a startled shout as he was pushed backward into a hole, and he flinched back when he saw glowing red eyes in the corner.

"It stays in the pit."

Tommy couldn't move as Techno sprinted at him, expertly aiming a punch to Tommy's stomach, kicking and hitting him to the point of Tommy being collapsed against the wall of the pit, gasping for painful breaths.

And then Techno—a different Techno, although Tommy wasn't sure how he could tell—was in front of Tommy, his eyebrows knitted together in concern.

"Drink this potion," Techno said, pressing the potion into Tommy's hand.

Tommy tried to uncup it, but suddenly it was sticky blue, and Ghostbur was hovering over him, blue tears running down his cheeks.

"Isn't... isn't Dream the one that hurt you?" he asked, "Didn't he... ruin your beach party? Wasn't he just watching you?"

Watching you.

Tommy woke up suddenly, his eyes snapping open as he sucked in a sharp breath.

As his eyes adjusted, Tommy realized that he was still in that same dark room as he had been in before he managed to get whatever amount of sleep his body had decided to bless him with.

His stomach felt worse than it did before, however, and his throat was drier than a desert biome.

Tommy just wanted some food. He wanted some company.

And if that meant Dream coming back to provide both of those, what did it matter? Dream was his friend, right?

Ghostbur's words echoed in Tommy's head over and over again, like a haunting song.

"Wasn't he just watching you?"

That was the realization Tommy had made up on that tower, hadn't he? That day when Dream blew up Logstedshire, and Tommy had decided to... decided to... end it.

But Dream was his *friend*. He patched up Tommy's wounds; he offered Tommy comfort; he was there when no one else was.

And yet...

Would a friend really chain him up? Would a friend really refuse to feed him for what felt like days on end? Would a friend really hurt him?

Had Dream been manipulating him? He had manipulated Tommy before.

Tommy wasn't so sure. He just wanted to get out of this room.

As if his thoughts summoned it, Tommy heard a rattling sound come from the door, and suddenly the tiny room was flooded with light, which hurt Tommy's eyes.

Squinting, Tommy couldn't decide if he felt relieved or just more dread filled when he saw Dream enter the room.

"Dream?" Tommy whispered, his voice sounding like sandpaper.

"Hi, Tommy," Dream said, walking in front of Tommy and standing over him in a way that made Tommy's heart palpitate, "Have you learned your lesson?"

Dream was talking about not attempting to escape, about not causing a racket, about the abysmal way Tommy had acted earlier.

Had he learned his lesson? Or would he try to escape again when he had the chance?

Well, at the very least, Tommy knew the answer Dream wanted to hear. He might as well give it to him, regardless of whether or not Tommy actually believed it.

"Yes," Tommy whispered, "I shouldn't have tried to run."

"You shouldn't have," Dream agreed, crouching down in front of Tommy. His voice softened slightly. "Let's get you out of those chains, huh?"

Tommy practically sobbed in relief as Dream undid the chains around Tommy's wrists, freeing him for the first time in what might as well have been years.

Dream dropped the chains, and they landed on the ground with a clatter. Tommy let out a shuddering sigh.

"Thank you," he gasped, "Thank you."

Dream smiled, ruffling Tommy's hair, and Tommy wanted to sob at the touch. "See, you're learning already."

Tommy nodded, wishing Dream would give him more of that softness. *No, Dream was bad; Tommy had to get away*—Dream was Tommy's friend; Tommy deserved that punishment. *Tommy hadn't deserved it. Dream doesn't care about him.*

Tommy's thoughts were like a stirring storm, trying to rile him up and do something that he knew he would ultimately regret.

Tommy tried to take his mind off of his warring thoughts, and his eyes landed on Dream's hand, the one he wasn't using to ruffle Tommy's hair with.

It was... it was missing two fingers.

Tommy looked away instantly, nausea churning in his stomach. When had that happened?

"What's wrong?" Dream asked, his voice light, concerned even.

Tommy hesitated before finally summoning the courage to ask, "What happened to your hand?"

"Oh." Dream's tone was darker now, and Tommy suppressed a shudder. "That was a parting gift from Wilbur."

What? What did Dream mean, a parting gift from Wilbur? What did Wilbur do? What did Dream do to Wilbur?

"What do you mean?"

"Wilbur wanted to get his hands on you again," Dream said calmly, "He wanted to hurt you. I went to stop him, and he retaliated."

Wilbur wanted to get to Tommy? Well, that was nothing particularly new, but the hurting part seemed off. Wilbur had never really wanted to *hurt* Tommy, Tommy didn't think. Wilbur had just wanted to keep Tommy by his side.

Of course, it was still messed up, and Techno was probably right in saying that Wilbur shouldn't be hurting him like that.

But if Wilbur shouldn't be hurting him like that, surely Dream couldn't do it either?

"Oh," Tommy finally said, his voice somehow even more tremulous than before.

"Yeah," Dream said calmly. He grabbed Tommy's arms and pulled him to his feet. "Why don't you sit down on your bed? I'll bring you some food."

Tommy was more than happy to sit on something that *wasn't* a cold stone floor, and he quickly settled himself on top of his bed, twisting his hands in the blankets.

Tommy didn't trust Dream, which made him feel sick, because Dream was his *friend*. But at the same time, every time Tommy believed that Dream was his friend, it was like his heart did a flip, and he was taken back to Techno pulling him out of panic attacks and telling him that Dream didn't really seem like a friend.

Schlatt didn't seem to think that Dream was a good person. Then again, could Tommy really trust Schlatt after everything he'd done? Especially after he *lied* to Tommy about Techno?

Techno, who was captured by Dream. Techno, who was tortured by Dream. Techno, who had gotten stabbed to *protect* Tommy from Dream.

And maybe Wilbur had helped, but Dream was definitely the one to stab Techno. Tommy saw it; Tommy had *watched* as the sword entered Techno's stomach.

Dream was bad. Dream wasn't Tommy's friend. *Wasn't he?*

Tommy's breathing was getting more and more uneven, and he tried to steady it. Should he try to escape now? Should he try to find Phil and Techno and get the hell out of there?

But the last time Tommy had tried that, Dream had found out. The last time Tommy had attempted to escape, he had ended up chained to a bedpost for who knew how long.

He could do that again. Tommy wasn't sure if he could stand being put through that again.

So, escape was out of the picture, but if there was no hope for escape, what else was there?

The sound of footsteps approached, and Tommy was lurched out of his thoughts when he saw Dream carrying a bowl, presumably full of soup.

"I've got some food for you," Dream said, sitting down next to Tommy, causing the mattress underneath them to shift slightly, "Do you think you can handle it?"

Tommy was *not* about to be fed by Dream.

He tried to keep his face neutral. "Yeah," he said.

"Okay." Dream placed the bowl in Tommy's hands. It was warm to the touch, but it was like a warm blanket compared to the cold of the room. "Take it slow, alright?"

Tommy nodded. He knew what would happen if he ate too much. The first night after he arrived at Techno's house and made his basement, Tommy gorged on a lot of Techno's food and gapples. He ended up puking, his body not able to handle the copious amount he ate.

"Thank you," Tommy muttered, taking the spoon with trembling fingers.

"That's what friends are for."

Tommy nodded, and he sipped the soup carefully, trying not to burn his tongue on the steaming liquid.

It was *heaven*. Then again, Tommy's stomach would probably think that anything was heavenly at the moment, just glad to have *something* to digest.

When Tommy finished the bowl, he handed it back to Dream, who smiled at him.

"I'll be back in a bit," he told Tommy, squeezing his shoulder in a way that made Tommy want to shiver slightly, "Be good while I'm gone, alright?"

Tommy gave Dream a nod. "Alright," he whispered.

And with that, Dream left the room, the door shutting loudly behind him.

Tommy hugged his knees to his chest, glad to have some more freedom with his hands. The feeling of Dream's hand in his hair and on his shoulder still tingled against his skin.

Tommy wished he could go back to the way things were before. He wished he could go back to the days of Techno not knowing how to comfort him, and Wilbur not wanting to hurt him, and Phil actually being there.

If Tommy got out, could he ever try and rebuild that life with them? Could they make amends and start again? Or was Wilbur too far gone?

Maybe Dream was right. Maybe nobody cared about Tommy. Maybe there was no hope to repair the fractured bonds of his family.

But maybe he was wrong, and maybe, just maybe, Tommy could hope.

Chapter End Notes

Whoooo more pain for the boy.

But at least you got fluff at the beginning.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

(cloneinnit later tonight i hope)

Return of the Technobraid

Chapter Summary

Technoblade gets some therapy with dadza and molly forgot she was going to add plot to this chapter but that's okay character development matters as well.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, low self-esteem, self-blame, implied/referenced child abuse, referenced explosions, referenced captivity, referenced torture, referenced threat of death, you know, the usual

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sometimes, Technoblade wished he had the ability to rewind time.

LIKE LIFE IS STRANGE. YES REWIND WE CAN TRY AGAIN. THAT SOUNDS LIKE A BAD IDEA. No no let them finish. PLEASE PLEASE REWIND TIME IT WOULD BE SO COOL. A friendly reminder that is physically impossible.

Techno ignored chat, instead staring at the dog that was sitting firmly in his lap, not allowing Techno to stand up from his bed. Whenever Techno *tried* to get up and do something productive, Max would make a growling noise and dig his claws into the blankets, making it impossible for Techno to get up.

Well, not impossible. Techno was sure that with enough determination, he'd be able to get the dog off of him.

He just didn't particularly feel like it.

HAHA TECHNOSOFT. ISN'T THIS A CAT THING? MAX IS SECRETLY A CAT CONFIRMED? MAX YOU ARE THE BEST DOG. EXCUSE YOU THE BEST DOG IS CLEMENTINE AND EVERYONE KNOWS IT.

Ah yes, Clementine. Techno had seen that dog trailing Fundy and Tubbo, and Tubbo had explained that she was Tommy's therapy dog. Apparently, Tommy left her behind in his pursuit of Technoblade, which Techno supposed was a good thing. At the very least, Dream couldn't kill Tommy's emotional support animal.

Sighing, Techno brought his fingers into Max's fur, trying not to think too hard about what Tommy could be going through.

It stung to know that despite everything Techno went through in his attempts to keep Tommy safe; it only caused Tommy to go to Dream in the end anyway. What was even the point of all this suffering if nothing good came out of it?

Tubbo kind of had a point in his speech earlier. It did feel like they were running around in circles.

SPINNING AROUND IN CIRCLES. MERRYGOROUND. Ring around the rosie a pocket full of posies ashes, ashes we all fall down! That was probably the darkest thing this chat has ever said.

There was a knock on the door, which was a welcome distraction from the chaos that chat always was.

"Come in," he said tiredly.

Hopefully it wasn't someone he wanted to keep his reputation against, because he had a feeling that Max sitting in his lap wasn't going to help with it. Then again, maybe he would be more feared if he still managed to yield a sword with a dog sitting in his lap.

Fortunately, Phil was the one who entered the room, looking a little concerned, but what was new?

"You alright in here?" he asked, shutting the door behind him with a satisfying thump of wood against wood.

DADZA. DADZA DADZA. PHILZA MINECRAFT IS THE ONLY MAN EVER. HUG YOUR SON AGAIN THAT WAS REALLY POG. Hug hug hug hug hug hug...

Techno rolled his eyes. "I'm fine, Phil," he said, "I should be asking about you, since you were the one who was closest to the blast."

Phil's wings bristled slightly, miraculously undamaged by the explosion.

Okay, so that was a bit of an exaggeration. The wings weren't completely undamaged. The scars that were now all over Phil's skin seemed to be the most concentrated in Phil's wing, and Techno had a feeling that the explosion must've originated at that point. It was a miracle that the totem had decided to bring back Phil's feathers along with the limb.

Techno tried not to think about the phantom pain that was in his right arm. There was no point in dwelling on it right now.

"I'm fine, Tech," Phil said, "We're talking about you, not me."

"And I already said that I'm fine," Techno snapped, gripping onto Max's fur, "Leave it be, Phil."

Nooooooooo. I WANT MY THERAPY. PLEASE.

Phil sighed and walked across the room. The mattress sunk down slightly when Phil seated himself next to Techno, but he didn't complain. He couldn't really find it within himself to.

"Techno," Phil said slowly, resting his hand on Technoblade's shoulder, "You can't keep hiding this."

"I'm not hiding anything, Phil," Techno said brusquely.

WHY YOU LYING? WHY YOU LYING?

Phil raised his eyebrows. "Oh yeah?" he challenged, "No offense, mate, but I find that somewhat hard to believe."

Techno looked away, not wanting to meet Phil's eyes. Instead, he stared at a boring painting on the wall. A log cabin sat in the center, surrounded by heaps of snow. It sort of reminded Techno of their home, back when they were all children and everything was simpler.

AWW TECHNOSAD. WE NEED TO SING A SONG TO MAKE HIM FEEL BETTER. OO HOW ABOUT HAPPY BIRTHDAY? NO WAIT, DUCK SONG. WELL THE DUCK WALKED UP TO THE LEMONADE STAND--STOP

Phil sighed. "You've been through a lot," he said, "We all have. But Tubbo's right. We can't keep doing the same things we've always been doing, or nothing is going to change."

Techno gritted his teeth and forced himself to look away from the painting and back in the direction of Phil's face. He still refused to look the man in the eyes, instead focusing on his shoulder.

"What are you implying?" he asked, his tone probably harsher than he intended.

Phil didn't look hurt. "Techno, you get more aggressive when you keep things inside. Don't pretend you haven't pulled out a weapon when you've been startled recently."

Techno glared. It wasn't like he was *trying* to get all stab happy. He was just reacting on instinct, like everyone else.

"And I'm not saying it's not perfectly understandable," Phil said gently, "But keeping all of that inside is only going to hurt you, as well as the people around you."

Technoblade was practically grinding his teeth together as he forced himself to take a deep breath. "I'm *fine*, Phil. Besides, we have bigger things to worry about, like the fact that the public is probably going to blame *you* for the bombing incident."

Techno had to give it to Dream. He was smart. If they hadn't had that emotional speech about the power of collaboration earlier, Dream would've done a pretty stellar job in splitting them all apart into fractured pieces.

YAY FRIENDSHIP IS MAGIC. THE POWER OF COLLABORATION. What about the power of our fist? Short, but deadly.

“We’ll sort that out later.” Phil scratched the back of Max’s ears. “Tubbo and Fundy are speaking to Wilbur even as we speak, and then we’ll hopefully have a better idea of how to get back at Dream.”

Techno scowled, staring down at Max. “I should be speaking to him,” he muttered, “I was able to get through to Wilbur before.”

Of course, it was probably Techno’s fault for not choosing to speak to Wilbur when they were deciding who should go, instead sitting back while Tubbo offered to go with Fundy. He felt like a coward, but the idea of trying to speak to Wilbur made Techno’s skin crawl.

Techno hated himself for it. He was the *Blade*; he shouldn’t be acting like some sort of coward.

“You’re not a coward for choosing not to go,” Phil said, as if he could read Techno’s mind, “It was probably the best thing you could do for your mental health anyway.”

Techno snorted. “Tubbo shouldn’t be going if we’re talking about mental health.”

Techno still hadn’t forgotten the way Wilbur had held that knife up to Tubbo’s neck, ready to slice his throat and end a second one of Tubbo’s lives.

“It’s not ideal,” Phil admitted, glancing up at the ceiling, “But quit dodging the subject, mate. You’re not a coward for not wanting to talk to someone who hurt you, just like you’re not a failure for not being able to save Tommy.”

“I hate to break it to you Phil,” Techno said, “But that’s the definition of failure.”

“Then I will remind you that you *did* save Tommy,” Phil said, his voice firmer than it was a few moments before, “You got Tommy out of Pogtopia. It’s not your fault that Dream managed to manipulate him back.”

“See, it kind of is, considering that Tommy came back to rescue *me*. ”

“You couldn’t have known—”

“I could have,” Techno snapped, “I could have stopped Tommy from going. If I had just managed to escape the first time around, maybe Tommy wouldn’t be dead.”

HE’S NOT DEAD. Tommy is very alive. THAT BOY CAN’T DIE. HE’S GOT PLOT ARMOR. You got too meta.

Phil jerked back slightly, and Techno couldn’t help but to take vindication in it. Maybe now Phil would get off of his back.

As for whether or not Tommy was actually dead, Techno wasn’t really sure anymore. But he decided he was going to live by his rule of ‘always assume the worst.’ At least then, Techno

wouldn't have to feel the shock twice if it turned out that Tommy actually *was* dead.

Max brought his head to Techno's chest, as if he was trying to comfort Techno or something. Techno supposed it was a little soothing, and he scratched the dog behind the ears.

"Techno, you're proving my point," Phil said quietly, "You blame yourself."

"And you wouldn't?"

"It's not your fault."

"You avoided my question."

"You're avoiding my answers."

Techno and Phil stared at each other for a moment, locked in a battle of wills.

On one hand, Phil made a good point. Logically, there was no way that Techno would have been able to know that Tommy was going to come back to Dream. Or, at any rate, there was no way that Techno would have been able to stop Tommy in time.

But surely there could've been something that Techno could have done. Techno could have helped Tommy in *some* way. If he had tried to push Wilbur to killing him sooner—although the thought made him feel sick—or maybe if he had tried to stop Tommy from calling Dream...

"I can hear you thinking," Phil deadpanned, "Listen, let's make a deal, okay?"

Technoblade arched his eyebrows. "What sort of deal?"

"You tell me or *someone* what's going on inside your head, and I'll stop pestering you," Phil said.

OH GOOD DEAL. I LIKE THIS PLAN. WIN WIN.

"Well, Phil," Techno said dryly, "I have these voices, and they like to scream incoherent things at me at the worst times."

RUDE. YOU WANT TO HEAR INCOHERENT? OOoooooooooh, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious...

Phil rolled his eyes. "Nice try, mate. I already know about Chat and you know it."

"Fine, fine," Techno sighed, gripping onto Max's fur so tightly that he almost felt bad for the dog, even though he wasn't whining, "Listen, maybe all of this has been... a bit of an experience. But I can handle it by myself."

"But you don't have to." Phil brought his hands up to Techno's now-shoulder-length hair, and paused just before his fingers were brushing up against the hair. "May I?"

Techno probably should say no. That braid was a sign of honor, and Technoblade hadn't been doing many honorable things recently.

FALSE. YOU GOT STABBED FOR TOMMY. YOU DIDN'T KILL TUBBO. YOU'VE SAVED TUBBO'S LIFE. YOU HELPED WILBUR. YOU'RE DOING BABY STEPS FOR THERAPY. Haha we are therapy chat now.

Chat probably wasn't going to leave him alone on this point.

NOPE.

Techno took a deep breath. "Fine."

Phil's smile made it worth it, and Techno wasn't going to deny that he missed the feeling of Phil tugging his hair into an intricate braid, one far more detailed than Tommy or Wilbur could ever muster whenever they tried.

Thinking about those two braiding his hair when they were kids brought a lump to Techno's throat, and he quickly swallowed it back.

Damn these stupid emotions.

"Thanks, Phil," he croaked when he was done, bringing a hand to massage his eyes.

Phil brought Techno into a hug. "Anytime, mate."

Chapter End Notes

More hugs. Technoblade officially holds the record for the most healthy hugs in this fic.

I think.

On that note, i need people to hold me accountable, so make sure that the next chapter has george, quackity, and maybe (?) Tommy.

I remember when I thought this fic would be done by the end of May. That was cute.

Anyway, thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments.

Oh! And one more thing. My friend laurie has a [twitch](#). Please go and follow them because I want them to succeed. ^-^

Also I have a [survey](#).

Sorry long notes. <3

Help I'm Trapped

Chapter Summary

George is sad.

Phil gets 'arrested.'

Tommy is also sad and very very confused.

Chapter Notes

tw: referenced suicidal tendencies, child abuse, gaslighting, trauma, arrest, non consensual drugging, referenced terrorism

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

George, to put it simply, was tired.

As he lay in the hospital bed, staring up at the boring ceilings, he wondered how it all came to this. How did the Dream he used to know become such a terrible person? How could the Dream George thought he knew stand to do the things he was doing?

Sapnap was sitting next to his hospital bed, and they sat in mostly silence. Sapnap had expressed happiness that George was okay, and he had asked about how his injuries were feeling, but other than that, they were mostly quiet, saying nothing at all.

George was sick of the silence. Clearly, not communicating enough was how they managed to let Dream slip through their fingers until he was someone hardly recognizable. George wasn't about to let the same thing happen with him and Sapnap.

He didn't want to lose another friend.

“Shall we address the elephant in the room?” George asked dryly, not even bothering to attempt a smile. This wasn't exactly what one would call a happy matter.

Sapnap sighed, drumming his fingers against his knee. “If you want to.”

George wasn't sure he *wanted* to talk about how he saw Dream laugh as he blew up the ground beneath them. George wasn't sure he wanted to explain the terror he felt when Dream held that stupid button in his hands and pressed it. George didn't want to talk about any of it.

But he knew they needed to. At the very least, they could try to gain some semblance of closure.

“Alright,” George said. He took a deep breath. “Sapnap, Dream isn’t... he isn’t the Dream we know.”

Sapnap snorted. “I kind of figured,” he said, “I mean, the fact that he lied to you earlier and then killed a bunch of people.”

“Sapnap,” George said quietly, “Take this seriously.”

Sapnap’s expression grew soberer, and he sighed. “Okay, serious time.” He looked away, staring out the hospital window, which unfortunately gave a perfect view of the wreckage of the stage. “It’s just hard to believe he’d do this, you know?”

“He blew up L’manberg during the revolution.” George sighed. “This is arguably much less terrible.”

“True, I guess.” Sapnap shrugged. “But we were at war then.”

George wondered if war was actually a good excuse to destroy people’s homes. Of course, it happened in almost all wars, but was it really right?

Oh well, it didn’t particularly matter now.

“I think Dream thinks he is at war,” George admitted, “Just a very different one from the revolution.”

Sapnap made a frustrated noise. “I just don’t understand why he’d leave us behind. We’re his *friends*.”

“We used to be his friends,” George corrected, “I’m not sure... Dream would give us that title anymore.”

Sapnap stood up abruptly, his chair scraping loudly behind him. George winced.

“Sorry,” Sapnap said, inhaling deeply, “I just... I need some air or something.”

George understood. He sometimes wished he could leave the hospital and get some fresh air, but he hadn’t been discharged quite yet, so he was stuck just waiting.

He nodded to Sapnap. “If you see Dream, give him a good punch for me.”

Sapnap nodded, his expression darkening. “It will be more than just a *punch*.”

And with that, he stormed out, leaving George alone.

And then one of the nurses came in with a whole pile of ‘get well’ cards that seemed to be from Fundy, Tubbo, Quackity, Schlatt, and Philza. Well, Technoblade signed Philza’s card, but that hardly seemed to count.

It was sweet. It certainly made George feel slightly better about this entire situation.

But the distinct absence of one card, one from Dream, still ate at George's chest, and he still felt terribly alone.

The day after the stage disaster, things were a bit of a mess for everyone involved.

Tubbo and Fundy had returned from speaking to Wilbur, and while Fundy looked emotionally drained and closed off, Tubbo had quickly explained what Wilbur had said to them.

"Wilbur thinks that we should let Dream believe he's winning," Tubbo had said over the dining room table as they ate a quickly prepared salad, "This actually works out quite well for us as well, because it means that the people will be happy with us for taking action over the whole explosion incident."

"So, let me get this straight," Schlatt said, "You want us to put Phil in jail?"

Tubbo nodded. "Obviously, we can make it so that we can pull him out whenever we need to. But the people will be happy, and Dream will think that we've weakened ourselves, and that gives us an ally that Dream won't be expecting."

"I don't like it," Technoblade said almost instantly, stabbing his salad with more aggression, "But it is a pretty good strategy. 'Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.'"

"Sun Tzu," Phil said, looking thoughtful, "Well, I don't exactly like the idea of being stuck in prison myself, but like Techno said, it is a good strategy. And if it's what it takes to defeat Dream, I'm perfectly willing to do it."

"Oh, and there's something else," Fundy said, giving Phil an apologetic look, "About that whole explosion thing."

Tubbo's face paled slightly, and he grimaced. "Oh yeah."

Quackity had frowned at that. "What is it?"

"Well..." Fundy said slowly, "Wilbur said that while he was working with Dream, they had actually talked about putting small bombs, um, *inside* of people."

The silence was abrupt and shocked, and Phil was surprised that he didn't hear a fork clatter from somebody dropping it.

He felt a little ill at the thought. There had been a bomb *inside* of him? When had Dream done that? Sure, Phil remembered when he was knocked out cold, and he had indeed woken up with a chunk of his feathers gone, but he had just figured Dream wanted to cripple him, not that he wanted to put a *bomb* inside of him.

“They *what?*” Schlatt finally demanded, looking ill as he sipped his water.

“Yeah, um, I think we should just change the subject,” Tubbo said faintly, “We’re eating and all that.”

Phil agreed with that, although he had already lost his appetite completely. He should be eating; he knew that. He was probably going to prison soon, and he should try to enjoy a proper meal while he could.

But still, a bomb inside of him. That was... that was something else.

“Explains the scars,” Techno muttered from beside him.

“Yeah.” Phil forced himself to take a bite of his cherry tomato, the juices completely tasteless. He thought back to what he looked like in the mirror, how he literally looked like he had been patched back together. “Pleasant.”

They dropped it after that.

But now the next day had arrived, and there was another small, completely inconsequential detail that Phil had honestly forgotten about.

Schlatt.

Phil had never been fond of Schlatt. He made that very clear when he stormed into his office a few days ago and demanded to know what in hell he had done to his children.

But Phil could appreciate the genuine effort Schlatt was making to make things right, especially with that public speech, even though it was unfortunately cut off by the explosions.

Schlatt had the rest of the speech posted in the newspapers, so that the people could read what he was going to say, and let’s just say there had been some... outcry upon the realization that Schlatt was an abuser.

Of course, this was a very valid response. Even if Schlatt had been changing his ways, the people obviously didn’t want Schlatt as their president anymore, and they wanted Schlatt to face some proper consequences for what he had done. Niki had already done many interviews from different newspapers, since she was known to be against Schlatt almost from the very beginning. King Eret had also been asked of his opinion, but they had chosen not to comment.

Unfortunately, this meant that not only was *Phil* going to jail, but Schlatt would be joining him.

“No, you won’t,” Quackity said when Schlatt brought it up the next morning, “Before I establish proper checks and balances to make this place an actual democracy, I’m abusing my power and deciding that you only get house arrest.”

“House arrest, seriously?” Schlatt demanded.

“Seriously,” Quackity said, “Listen, Schlatt, you’ve done some screwed up things, I would never deny it. But you’ve also made it clear that you’re a changed man, so for now, yes, you’re getting house arrest.”

Nothing they could say could change Quackity’s mind on the matter, and Phil thought that it might actually be a pretty good idea. Sure, the people wouldn’t be super pleased that Schlatt was getting off somewhat easy, and Technoblade was certainly less than happy.

“See, here it is with governments abusing their power,” Techno had grumbled under his breath.

Phil sighed. “Remember Techno,” he said, “We’re being friends.”

Techno scowled, looking like he wanted to cross his arms, but then he clearly remembered that wasn’t a viable option, so he just pointed aggressively at Quackity.

“Use some of that absolute power to put Wilbur in some sort of therapy ward or something.”

“Oh yeah, we really should do that,” Schlatt said, writing down something on a notepad, “Quackity, how much time do I have before I’m no longer president?”

Quackity glanced at the clock on the wall. “Um, three hours.”

“Okay, that’s plenty of time to temporarily place Wilbur in a psychiatric hospital while we wait for his trial,” Schlatt said, “We actually would have needed to do that regardless, I hear he’s getting increasingly more, um, suicidal.”

“And who’s fault would that be?” Phil asked, temporarily forgetting their pact of teamwork and lacing his tone with false sweetness.

Tubbo chose that moment to walk in with Fundy, who was carrying Clementine in his arms with an alarming show of strength.

“I’d say a combination of Phil’s broken parenting, the stress of the L’manberg war, Schlatt’s banishing of Wilbur and Tommy, and being all but abandoned by everyone else,” Tubbo said.

Fundy looked uncomfortable at that, and Phil stared at Tubbo with poorly concealed shock. He wasn’t exactly *wrong*, but Phil had to wonder how on earth Tubbo knew that.

“Where’d you hear all that?” Techno asked, clearly surprised as well.

Tubbo shrugged. “Enough time in Wilbur’s presence will do that,” he said, “I mean, I was tied up in a corner with him once, and I did just talk to him at prison, so…”

Schlatt swore under his breath. “I keep telling myself I need to get your therapy, and yet I don’t do anything about it,” he said.

Tubbo blinked. “I’m fine actually, I don’t need—”

“What did we say about being open?” Schlatt said, pointing his fork at Tubbo with an arched eyebrow.

Tubbo sighed. “Fine, maybe, just maybe, I need *some* therapy,” he admitted, “But only some! Besides, shouldn’t we be focusing more attention on Tommy?”

Phil felt his feathers stand up on end at the mention of Tommy. At first, he had been so sure that his youngest was actually dead, but now, he could already feel Tubbo’s insistence rubbing off on him, which wasn’t good, because when they *did* eventually find Tommy’s body, it was only going to hurt all the more.

“Remember the plan,” Techno said, “We can’t do anything until that date Dream gave us.”

Tubbo scowled. “I hate it.”

“I know you do,” Phil said gently, “But that’s all we can do at the moment.”

“I hope he’s doing alright,” Fundy said, placing Clementine down, “Clementine misses him.”

Phil closed his eyes, the image of two-year-old Tommy toddling around with some flowers in his hands flashing across his mind.

“We all do.”

Three hours later, Phil was put into cuffs and led out of the white house by heavily armed guards.

Technoblade made a show of shouting in outrage as Phil was taken away, although Phil was pretty sure that a good amount of it wasn’t an act. He seemed genuinely angry that Phil was going to be forced to sit in prison.

Phil wasn’t too worried, though. He could handle a prison, and it wasn’t like he was going to be staying there for long.

Besides, Phil didn’t doubt his abilities to break out if it came to it.

Tommy was picking flowers in a field, running back and forth from the flowers to Phil, who happily took the flowers from Tommy’s hands and allowed him to collect more and more.

“Who are the flowers for?” Phil had asked quietly, smiling fondly at Tommy and ruffling his hair.

Tommy smiled wide, grabbing onto his father’s cloak. “They’re for Mummy!”

Phil’s smile dimmed slightly, but he didn’t reproach Tommy for trying to give flowers to a dead person.

“Really?” he asked instead, “How so?”

Tommy hummed slightly, trying to climb up Phil like he was a tree of some kind. He wasn't all that successful, but if Tommy was anything, he was determined.

"Wilby brings flowers," Tommy explained as Phil helped Tommy up onto his shoulders, "He said Mummy would like them, so I'm helping!"

"Well, that's sweet of you," Phil said.

"I'm very sweet."

Phil laughed, bringing Tommy into his arms and pressing a kiss against his temple. "You're my sweet boy."

Tommy giggled. "Lemme down, Daddy, I wanna get more flowers for Mummy!"

Phil nodded and set Tommy back down in the grass, and Tommy quickly dashed to where more flowers were growing.

Tommy hummed a small tune that Wilbur had been playing on his guitar the other day as he crouched down and grabbed a handful of flowers. Sticking his tongue out in concentration, Tommy yanked the flowers out from the earth, and he smiled at the new bouquet he had created.

A large butterfly suddenly flew in his face, and Tommy jumped, letting out a surprised cry.

The butterfly didn't seem afraid of Tommy, however, and it landed on his flowers, slowly flapping its purple wings up and down.

"Pretty," Tommy whispered, moving his finger to touch the butterfly.

The butterfly started flying away, and Tommy leapt up, chasing after it. For some reason, the butterfly was pretty easy to chase, and it led Tommy deeper into the flower field, which was suddenly much bigger than it was before.

There was a boy standing in the field, and Tommy forgot the butterfly, instead running to the boy.

"Who are you?" Tommy asked, staring up at the tall boy.

The boy smiled grimly. "You don't recognize me?"

Tommy's eyes widened as he took in the blue Antarctic Empire garb, the semi-long hair tied up in a pony-tail, the burn scars that he had only earned from exile.

And suddenly Tommy was no longer three, but sixteen again, and he stared at the version of himself that used to exist with wide eyes.

"Hi, Tommy," the future Tommy said, smiling grimly. He cringed. "Okay, that was weird to say."

Tommy swallowed. “You’re... real?”

The future Tommy shrugged. “I don’t know,” he admitted, “But Karl warned me that some of this might end up happening, so...”

“You mean Karl Jacobs?” Tommy asked, “What about him?”

The future Tommy laughed, massaging his eyes. “Well, he’s a time traveler, so he’s figuring out how we got all... swappy.”

“Swappy?” Tommy asked. Then, he realized. “Oh, you mean...”

“Yeah, we switched,” future (or was it past?) Tommy said, shrugging, “I mean, it’s not horrible here. Technoblade’s house is *way* nicer than Pogtopia except...”

Tommy felt like lead had sunk into his stomach. “Except Wilbur,” he said quietly, “I’m sorry, I should’ve—”

“Don’t,” future Tommy said lightly, “I’m sure you’re trying now. Anyway, I should probably say what I’m supposed to say before I run out of time.”

“Run out of time?” Tommy demanded, “Listen, I don’t even know what’s going on.”

Tommy groaned. “Well, long story short, we’re ninety-percent sure that Dream did something in an attempt to time travel for some stupid reason, but he screwed everything up in the process and instead had us like... swap or something... so now Karl’s trying to fix it but the time travel process is screwed up for *everyone*, and so we’re effectively stuck for the time being.”

That explained almost nothing.

“So, what was the point of this maybe real meeting if we’re stuck?” Tommy demanded.

Future Tommy’s eyes brightened. “Actually, that’s what I’m supposed to talk to you about! Karl’s actually making progress in fixing everything so...”

“So now we’re switching back,” Tommy finished for him, understanding settling like a weight in his chest.

The future Tommy frowned, clearly seeing Tommy wasn’t jumping up and down at the news. “It’s up to you, actually,” he said softly, “You don’t have to... you know... switch back.”

“What about you?” Tommy crossed his arms. “Don’t you want to go back?”

Future Tommy hesitated. “How about we think about it together, yeah? Karl said it would take him a few more days to figure everything out anyway.”

Tommy swallowed. “Yeah, okay.”

“Oh, and one more thing.” Future Tommy smiled. “Dream’s awful. Don’t you forget it.”

Tommy woke up in the bed Dream had provided for him, sweating.

Groaning slightly, he sat up, wiping some of the sweat from his forehead as he pulled himself out of the bed.

That dream was... strange.

It was probably something that his mind just conjured up, but Tommy wasn't about to complain. It was certainly leagues better than those stupid nightmares he'd been getting recently.

Still, Tommy couldn't help but to think back to the words that his other self said.

"Dream's awful. Don't you forget it."

There was a time when Tommy believed that with certainty, but now...

Tommy jumped when the door opened, revealing none other than Dream himself.

"Good, you're awake," Dream said shortly, "Did you enjoy your nap?"

Tommy nodded quickly. "Yeah, I did... thank you."

Dream smiled. "It was nothing," he said, "We're friends, after all."

Were they?

"Yeah," Tommy agreed, deciding that he'd say everything he knew Dream wanted him to say regardless of whether or not it was true. It was safer that way. "You're my only friend."

"That's right," Dream agreed, "Come on, I want to show you around."

Tommy hesitated. That was strange. Dream seemed pretty adamant about Tommy staying in the room before.

"You're... letting me out?" Tommy asked slowly.

Dream laughed. "I mean, you can't stay in that stuffy room forever, can you?"

Tommy felt his spirits rise slightly. Dream was letting him out of this stupid room. Surely Dream couldn't be that bad if he was willing to do that? Didn't most kidnappers like... keep their prisoners in prison?

"Thank you," Tommy said appropriately as he followed Dream out the door and down a long series of hallways.

The hallways seemed to go on for forever, and Tommy couldn't help but to wonder what the point of it all was. Surely Dream had something better to do with his time than to create a labyrinth?

A small memory rose to the surface. Techno had been telling Tommy the story of Theseus, but it was before November sixteenth. Tommy was probably nine at the time, and he had listened with rapt attention as Techno had explained that the monster, or minotaur had been hidden in a labyrinth that served as a prison for the beast.

Was this like a prison? Who was Dream trying to keep inside?

Well, there was Phil, and he had looked worse for wear, and of course, Technoblade had been... well... tortured, as far as Tommy could tell.

Tommy felt slightly dizzy. It was like he was being pulled in two different directions. Which side of the story was he supposed to trust? Dream the monster? Or Dream the friend?

They stopped in front of a dead end, and Tommy frowned in confusion. It looked like Dream had made a wrong turn, but he didn't dare say it out of fear of saying something to make the man angry.

Dream calmly pulled out a pickaxe and mined through the dead end, going through five layers of stone before revealing another long hallway.

This place was really thorough, huh? It was certainly more thorough than it was when Tommy tried to run away from Dream however long ago that was.

Tommy continued to follow Dream down the hall, and they finally found themselves in what looked like a kitchen area. Someone was sitting at the table, drinking something, and for a terrifying moment, Tommy thought it was Wilbur.

But closer inspection revealed that the person was definitely *not* Wilbur, instead being...

"Punz?" Tommy asked, so shocked that he forgot to gage Dream's body language in an attempt to figure out if he was actually allowed to speak.

Punz sighed, looking up at Tommy with a bored look. "Hi," he said, "Fancy seeing you here."

Dream put a hand on Tommy's shoulder, and Tommy winced when it tightened like a predator trapping their prey with its claws.

"Punz helped me out of a very tight spot earlier," he said, "He's on our side."

"It'll cost you extra," Punz muttered, taking another swig of whatever he was drinking, "Honestly, I took out so many of those stupid scouts for you while you were 'recuperating' or whatever that meant."

Tommy frowned. Scouts? When did that happen?

"You know full well I was respawning after Wilbur ruthlessly killed me," Dream said, his voice hard.

Tommy shuddered at the mention of Wilbur. Even now, he could feel Wilbur's fingers in his hair, and the hugs that felt like a cage, and the words leeching with toxicity.

Dream ruffled Tommy's hair, pulling Tommy out of his thoughts. "How about some food?" he asked, a small tint of, well, foreboding in his tone.

Something felt very off about all of this, but Tommy nodded, allowing Dream to lead Tommy to a seat at the table, still using that cage-like grip.

"I'll get you something," Dream said as soon as Tommy was properly seated on the hard-wooden chair. Still, anything was better than the floor.

"So," Punz said slowly, "What are you doing here, kid?"

Tommy blinked. "I..."

Well, he had come to save Techno and Phil from Dream, but now he was safe with Dream.

This was too confusing.

"He's with me," Dream finished for him, and Tommy slumped with relief, grateful for the escape from the conversation.

Dream returned to the table, placing a bowl of soup down in front of Tommy. "Eat all of that," Dream commanded, sounding like he did whenever he told Tommy to put his items in the whole, "It's important for your health."

Tommy nodded, still confused out of his mind of who he should be trusting, or if he should be trusting anyone in the room in this situation.

But that could wait after some food.

Slowly, Tommy took the spoon with trembling fingers, staring down at the soup in front of him. There was something strangely... off... about the soup. The color was slightly different from most soups Tommy had ever had, but maybe Dream was a used more variety with cooking than Tommy had originally thought.

And besides, it didn't matter if the color was slightly strange. Dream had told Tommy to eat the entire thing, and Tommy wasn't about to disobey Dream.

Sighing, Tommy quickly sipped at the soup, bracing himself for some disgusting taste or feeling of poison or something.

Nothing. There was a strange aftertaste, but Tommy was going to assume that there was just some strange ingredient in the soup. Tommy wasn't about to insult Dream for a strange ingredient.

Tommy took another spoonful of soup, and this time, the strange aftertaste was more obvious. The spoon was also getting harder to hold in his hand, as though the sheer weight of eating was making the utensil heavier and heavier.

Tommy was on his third bite when he finally realized why he felt like he was weaker, as well as why the aftertaste of the soup was so strange.

He was being *drugged*.

But why? There was no reason to drug Tommy as far as he could tell. Unless Dream wanted to experiment on him or something freaky like that, Tommy couldn't think of any reason that Dream would use a potion on him.

His heart quickening, Tommy looked up at Dream nervously. Maybe this was all some huge misunderstanding.

"Dream..." Tommy said slowly, "I, um, I think there's potions in this soup."

Dream's lips turned to a frown, and Tommy prepared himself for the worst as Dream leaned down and took a sip of the soup himself. Tommy watched closely, but he couldn't see anything change about the man as he shook his head.

"There's nothing in here," Dream said, bringing a hand to Tommy's forehead, "Are you feeling alright?"

Tommy moaned, leaning into Dream's hand. "I feel weird," he said, "Are you sure there wasn't anything in the soup?"

"Tommy," Dream said sharply, "There's nothing in the soup."

Tommy winced. "Right," he whispered, "Sorry."

Dream sighed, running his fingers through Tommy's hair again. "I'm sure you'll feel better if you finish your food."

Tommy stared at the soup skeptically, but Dream had said it wasn't drugged.

"Dream's awful. Don't you forget it."

But Dream was still hovering over him, his fingers still in Tommy's hair, and Tommy knew that arguing over a simple bowl of soup was just inconsiderate.

He continued eating.

Chapter End Notes

Whooo longer chapter than normal.

I'm actually trying to finish the fic within ten chapters tho, so can you blame me.

I hope you enjoyed, and if you did, please comment because I have so many wips going on that I'm not lying when I say that reception in the comments is a guide in what I chose to update next.

Thank you for reading! <3

Puffy like the Hair

Chapter Summary

Wilbur talks to Puffy.

Tubbo talks to himself.

And Techno talks to Sam. (And chat of course).

Chapter Notes

tw: implied/referenced child abuse, referenced amputation, suicidal thoughts, referenced terrorism, psychiatric hospitals (but only a therapy scene) (probably inaccurate),

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Do you know why you’re here, Mr. Soot?”

Wilbur scowled at the woman sitting in front of him. She had introduced herself as “Captain Puffy”, which was a fairly appropriate name for her, considering her hair was more puffed up than the overgrown wool of a sheep.

She was also apparently his “therapist.”

Wilbur hated her already.

“I’m here because Schlatt thinks I’m a threat,” Wilbur said. It was obvious enough.

Puffy wrote something down on her stupid clipboard. “Do you know why you’re seeing me specifically?”

“I know nothing about you,” Wilbur snarled, “Why should I know why Schlatt decided you would be filling my head with lies?”

“Firstly, I will not be lying to you in any of our sessions,” Puffy said, sounding unperturbed, “I’d appreciate it if you would do the same for me. Secondly, my question was referring to why you were in therapy in general, but if you want to get to know me better, I’d be happy to oblige you.”

Wilbur had wanted death, not a woman who was acting like a saint.

“Don’t bother.” Wilbur gave her a lazy smile. “I know what I need to know. You want to ‘fix’ me. You want to use whatever special training you have to make me the *perfect* person. You may as well give up now.”

Puffy’s expression didn’t falter.

“Mr. Soot, I’m going to be blunt with you for a moment,” she said. She shifted on her seat so that she was leaning forward slightly, her hands wrapped over the top of her clipboard. “You have committed many crimes that could land you with many years in prison. Are you aware of this?”

Wilbur rolled his eyes. “Yes, although I think you’re rather naïve for thinking I won’t be receiving a death sentence.”

Finally, Puffy frowned. “What makes you say that?”

God, was this woman actually stupid?

“Schlatt is a tyrant,” Wilbur informed her, “He exiled me and my brother. He abused his staff. He taxed Niki. He had me *killed*. He was going to kill Tommy—”

Wilbur cut himself off, suddenly recalling that Tommy hadn’t been killed when with Schlatt, that he had been publicly allowed outside without any guards. He saw it on the papers.

Papers published lies all the time.

There were photos.

Photos could be tampered with.

Dream had all but admitted to lying to Wilbur.

“Then I’m sure you’ll be pleased to know that Schlatt has publicly admitted to nearly all of these crimes,” Puffy said, pulling a few newspapers from her inventory and tossing them over to Wilbur.

“Handing me objects, how scandalous,” Wilbur sneered, catching both newspapers in his hands.

The staff at this hospital prison place hadn’t allowed Wilbur to hold even a pen, out of fear for his “safety” or whatever they liked to tell themselves.

“I’ll take them away if you try anything,” Puffy warned, although she didn’t look too concerned. Wilbur did suppose it would take an extra amount of effort to kill himself with a newspaper.

He could try to choke on it in some way—

Puffy was giving him a sharp look, and Wilbur sighed, rolling his eyes again and actually glancing down at the content of the papers.

President Jschlatt's Public Admission of Abuse of Power Goes Up in Flames

The grainy photo underneath the headline was an image of a blown-up stage, smoke obstructing most of the surroundings. Still, Wilbur could spot a lone figure standing in the smoke in the remains of the destroyed stage.

Wilbur's hands began shaking as he continued to read the paper as rapidly as possible, soaking every single word in. Schlatt had *confessed*? And there had been an act of terrorism half-way through?

Wilbur couldn't stop himself from laughing at the absurdity of it all.

"This can't be real," he informed Puffy, "I thought you said you weren't going to lie to me, *Captain*."

Puffy pointed to a certain spot of the page. "I'd suggest you keep reading," she said, "Even though he was interrupted half-way, the full printed speech is published on here. Some of it's for you."

Yeah, probably a public declaration making Wilbur look like some sort of demon for being screwed over by Schlatt first.

Instead, Wilbur's eyes landed on a paragraph near the end of the speech.

I would also like to apologize to Mr. Soot and Mr. Innit. Despite the grains of truth behind my words the day I took my place as president of this nation, I exiled you because you were a threat to my power not because you were a threat to L'manberg's well-being, and that was wrong .

Wilbur... Wilbur wasn't sure what to think about that.

Wilbur continued to skim the article, searching for some possible explanation as to why Schlatt would throw away his power with such *lies*, but another name popped out of the page instead.

Philza Minecraft was the only survivor and is suspected of being responsible for the catastrophe.

So that's what Tubbo and Fundy were talking about when they had asked where Dream would have hidden one of those tiny bombs.

God, that conversation about human bombs felt like it had taken place years ago. The idea that Wilbur had indulged such an idea with Dream made him feel slightly ill. Not because he cared about what happened to Phil. He just hated thinking back to when he thought he and Dream were *allies*.

"Fascinating," Wilbur finally said, not sure what he was supposed to say.

"If you're still worried about Schlatt, you might want to take a look at the second article," Puffy said pleasantly.

Wilbur found it unlikely that he'd see anything more shocking than Schlatt apologizing and getting blown up by a bomb inside Phil, but he had nothing better to do, and getting informed on outside events was a much more preferable pastime than being talked down to by this therapist.

Therefore, he pulled the second newspaper out from underneath the first.

Ex-President Jschlatt Arrested for his Crimes

No. *No*.

There was no way this could be real. This was far too good to be true for it to possibly be real.

But the contents of the article only seemed to solidify its title, saying that Schlatt was going into house arrest by order of newly instated President Quackity. It continued to add a small part on *Phil* getting arrested for the explosion that Wilbur himself had told Tubbo and Fundy that Phil wasn't directly responsible for.

Were they actually taking Wilbur's advice? Were they actually making it look like Phil was in prison and Schlatt was out of the picture just so they could take out *Dream*?

Good. That green bastard deserved it.

The idea of successfully manipulating Dream made Wilbur laugh out loud, and Puffy raised her eyebrows.

"Did you like what you saw?"

Wilbur smiled, trying to make it as threatening as possible. Maybe he could scare her away with enough effort.

"As a matter of fact, yes," he said.

Wilbur wasn't even worried about his chances of a death sentence decreasing with Quackity around. Schlatt probably had enough access to Quackity to put the idea into his head, and then it was only a matter of time before Wilbur could *finally* die.

If Wilbur could, he'd already have started starving himself, but apparently the stupid staff here enjoyed making sure that Wilbur actually ate some of their disgusting food.

"Including the part about your father?"

Wilbur crossed his arms, looking away with a scowl. "He's no father of mine."

"And what makes you say that?"

"You just love asking questions, don't you?" Wilbur snapped.

"It *is* part of my job."

“Well, I’m sick of them.”

Wilbur didn’t answer another one of her questions for the entire session.

Tubbo was sitting on the bench. Tommy wasn’t sitting next to him.

Why would he be? Tommy was *exiled*. Dream had taken him away, and Tubbo... Tubbo still hadn’t visited him.

Tubbo clenched his fists. Dream said that Tommy hadn’t wanted visitors. And why should he? Tubbo had *exiled* him.

But he had to, right? Dream was going to hurt the people. Tubbo couldn’t subject thousands of people to be walled in. They had families; they had *lives*, and Tommy always had been a liability to L’manberg’s safety—

It was quieter without Tommy.

Tubbo clenched his fists, trying not to think of what Tommy would say if he saw Tubbo in this situation. It would probably be something like—

“You look like crap.”

Tubbo snapped his head up, but it wasn’t Tommy speaking to him.

It was *Tubbo*. He bore the same scars that Tubbo had received from Technoblade’s fireworks, although he wasn’t wearing that stiff suit. Instead, he was wearing the same green button-up that Tubbo had always liked.

That’s when Tubbo remembered that he wasn’t in this time anymore. He was no longer President. That was Schlatt’s—no wait, Quackity’s job now. Tubbo no longer had the scars that the Tubbo standing in front of him had.

What a strange thing for his dreams to do. Oh well, Tubbo probably wouldn’t remember any of this when the morning rolled along.

“Who are you?” Tubbo asked, staring at his counterpart.

It was a stupid question, but Tubbo genuinely had no idea what else he was supposed to say.

“I’m you? I guess?” the other Tubbo offered, sitting down next to Tubbo on the bench, “I’m the Tubbo that you replaced when you time traveled.”

Oh.

Tubbo’s eyes widened, and he stared at his counterpart with a horrified expression.

“So, you—”

“Woke up as a president of an unfamiliar version of my nation and brand-new burn scars that I didn’t recognize?” Tubbo finished for him. “Yeah, pretty much.”

Tubbo grimaced. “Sorry about that.”

“Nah,” the other Tubbo said, “It’s not your fault that Dream decided to mess around with time.”

Tubbo swallowed. He had no idea if this was still just a figment of his imagination or not, but he decided he might as well treat it as if it were real, just in case.

“Is everyone else having dreams like this?”

The other Tubbo hummed. “Probably,” he said, “God, I can’t imagine what sort of dreams Dream is having at the moment.”

The idea of two Dreams in the same room made Tubbo shudder.

Suddenly, their surroundings faded. Tubbo glanced around in confusion, but they were already just sitting on a bench in the middle of an endless void.

“What happened?”

“I think someone’s waking me up,” other Tubbo said pleasantly, “But don’t worry, we’ll talk again.”

“Oh, alright then,” Tubbo said, “Thanks, I guess.”

“No problem,” other Tubbo said, “For the record, you’re a lot nicer than Technoblade makes you out to be.”

And then he was gone.

When Tubbo woke up, he wondered if Schlatt was having a similar dream, or if this really was a strange thing that his mind had decided to make up.

But most of his dreams hadn’t felt so *real*.

“You’re a lot nicer than Technoblade makes you out to be.”

Tubbo snorted. Technoblade thought he was a tyrant during that time.

And maybe he had been a small bit of one, but things were different now, and Tubbo had more pressing issues on his mind.

It was three more days until *the* day.

Tubbo had to make sure he was prepared.

Technoblade woke up with a headache somehow *worse* than usual.

TECHNOBLADE. TECHNOBLADE TECHNOBLADE TECHNOBLADE. Technoblade, you love us, right? You wouldn't trade us for a stupid, amnesiac chat, right? You like Cassandra chat better, right???

What the actual heck?

This was like the time that Chat time traveled, except this time...

No this was *exactly* like that time Chat time traveled.

"Don't tell me you time traveled again," he muttered, pulling himself out of bed with a quiet groan.

but... in theory... we could. IF YOU TRADE US FOR THAT STUPID CHAT I WILL DISOWN YOU. WELL, TECHINCALLY HE DISOWNED US FIRST. THIS IS A TERRIBLE DAY FOR THE TECHNOCHAT COMMUNITY.

"Nobody's disowning anyone!" Techno said, unable to resist the urge to raise his voice over the sound of the voices that were technically only in his head, even though they really did sound like they were bouncing off of the walls.

GOOD. HA TAKE THAT AMNESIAC GHOSTBUR CHAT. How many times do I have to tell you Ghostbur wasn't— WE ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY GHOSTBUR. THE CASSANDRA ARC PREVAILS.

"First of all, you guys haven't predicted anything recently," Techno said, "You have knowledge of a different future, and I do believe you, so are you really Cassandra anymore?"

YES. NO? STOP ASKING STUPID QUESTION TECHNOBLADE. I PREDICT THAT SAM WILL COME INTO THE ROOM.

Techno snorted. "Yeah—"

There was a knock on the door.

For half a moment, Techno thought it was Phil, and he approached it without second thought.

Then, Techno remembered that Phil was currently residing in prison, and therefore, there was no way that whoever was behind the door was actually his father.

The idea of Phil in prison, although Phil had been perfectly fine with the idea, still made Techno's blood boil, so it took everything he had not to sound downright threatening when he spoke next.

"Who is it?"

"Um, it's Sam."

WE WIN THESE. How. PLOT CONVENIENCE MY BELOVED. SAM. Oh great, it's this guy.

Techno really had to agree with the final statement in that stream of voices. Techno was not at all pleased with the idea of speaking to the guy who literally gave Dream the bomb that nearly took away Phil's final life if it weren't for a stroke of dumb luck on Phil's part.

"What do you want?"

"I have your arm."

HIS WHAT? EW. WHY DOES HE HAVE HIS ARM??? THIS IS A TRULY TERRIFYING TIMELINE. NEVER DID I THINK I'D HEAR SAM AND ARM IN THE SAME SENTENCE. TECHNICALLY YOU DIDN'T—

Techno tuned the voices out, hoping that this wasn't some prank. "My apologies, my blood-thirsty voices probably just got confused, but what do you have?"

Sam let out a shaky laugh. "Your prosthetic?"

Oh, that made so much more sense.

Not to mention that this may redeem Sam *ever* so slightly in Techno's eyes.

Techno swung the door open, and Max jumped down from Techno's bed to stand in front of Techno protectively. Techno appreciated the sentiment, but Sam couldn't hurt Techno if he tried.

Sam stepped inside, holding what looked to be a netherite prosthetic, which was pretty cool, Techno wasn't going to lie.

"It's not the fanciest thing in the world," Sam said awkwardly, "It's easier to develop a prosthetic that goes from the elbow joint instead of the shoulder.

Techno glanced down at where his arm ended on his shoulder. "Yeah, that is a luxury I do not seem to have."

"I made it work," Sam said, "I don't think you'd want to hold a sword with it quite yet, but I'll work on it."

TECHNOBLADE IS THE WINTER SOLDIER. WE NEED A RED STAR ON THE ARM. YESSSSSSSSSSSS.

"How heavy is it?" Techno asked, glancing at the netherite material, "Netherite isn't exactly the lightest thing in the world."

"I did some tampering," Sam said, "Some enchantments and such. Besides, most of the inside of the arm is the engineering that allows you to bend the elbow and pick things up with the fingers."

Techno nodded. He had to admit it, if this worked exactly as Sam said it would, he would be pretty impressed. And it would be nice to be able to move two arms again in some fashion. Phantom limb pain could be annoying when Techno realized his arm still wasn't there.

"Do you want me to put it on, or do you think you can handle it?" Sam asked, still looking like he felt pretty out of place.

"Show me how this first time," Techno said, rolling up his sleeve and revealing his stump, which was covered up by a sock, "I've worked with prosthetics before, but not one this advanced."

Sam nodded, and for the next hour or so, Sam guided Techno on how to use and take care of the prosthetic. Techno had to admit; it really was a work of genius. The redstone in there had to be intense.

"And I guess that's it," Sam finished, more relaxed than he had been when he had first entered the room.

Techno looked down at the arm, practicing rotating the wrist, before glancing back up at Sam. "Yeah," he said, "Um, I owe you one."

"No," Sam sighed, shaking his head, "Between providing Dream with a deadly bomb, and Tommy slipping away right underneath my nose, I think it's fairly safe to say that we're even, or I still owe you."

HE SAID IT. WHAT SORT OF IDIOT GIVES DREAM A WEAPON? HE WAS NEUTRAL. SO???

That was a fair point.

Sam's communicator buzzed, and he reached into his pocket to give it a glance.

His expression dropped so drastically that it didn't exactly take a genius to figure out what was going on.

"Dream?" Techno offered.

"Unfortunately," Sam said tightly, "he wants another one of those bombs."

Of course, he did.

"Surely he realizes that you aren't going to give it to him?"

Sam sighed, typing something down. "If the idea is to fool Dream into thinking he's winning, I need to at least look like I'm considering it. Worst comes to worst, I'll give him a defective weapon. It won't be an issue."

Techno scowled. "I don't like this."

"And you think I do?" Sam asked.

“I don’t know, do you?”

Sam sighed. “I’m going to tell Quackity about this. Thanks for not killing me on sight.”

Technoblade scoffed, glancing back down at his arm. “Don’t get used to it.”

Chapter End Notes

alrighty, day 1 of writing bjar for five days straight complete.

Next chapter I want Tommy, and at least two other povs.

Thank you for reading, i hope you enjoyed, and please comment because they are very encouraging and I love hearing from you guys. (no pressure tho) <3

-REST STOP time, you know the drill

The Vessel with the Pestle

Chapter Summary

Tommy makes a realization.

Wilbur does not want therapy still.

Punz only cares about Punz.

Tommy takes advantage of this fact.

Chapter Notes

tw: child abuse, injury, blood, manipulation, referenced non consensual drugging, suicidal thoughts, discussion on suicide, possessive behavior, abandonment issues, surgery but only one sentence, and discussion on poison, claustrophobia

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy was exhausted.

As soon as Tommy finished eating the maybe-maybe-not-drugged soup, Dream allowed Tommy a few moments of just trying to gather enough strength before he dragged Tommy to a more open room.

The walk was hard enough. It felt as though his muscles had been replaced by slime, and each step became harder and harder as Tommy tried to keep his breathing steady.

Dream pulled a stone sword out of his inventory and handed it to Tommy. Tommy took it gratefully, glad to finally have a weapon in his possession again. It was abnormally heavy in his hands, which was either attributed to whatever was in that soup, or Tommy had simply been *woefully* out of practice recently.

Both were very possible reasons, and Tommy wasn't sure which he would chose.

But it was strange. Why was Dream giving him a sword?

Dream must've seen the questioning look on Tommy's face, because he pulled out his own sword out of his inventory.

“I want to see how much you’re able to protect yourself,” Dream explained, “Just in case we get attacked.”

Tommy nodded. That seemed reasonable enough, and he appreciated the sentiment especially. At least Dream wasn’t bad enough to let Tommy be defenseless on top of everything else.

Or, at least, Tommy was pretty sure Dream didn’t want Tommy to be defenseless. In all honesty, Tommy wasn’t entirely sure what was going on these days. His head felt like the same soup he had just eaten.

Dream moved first, aiming his sword toward Tommy’s leg, and Tommy tried to raise his sword defensively like he always did.

But for some reason, the sword was *far* heavier than Tommy had previously anticipated. Tommy had barely managed to get the sword up a few inches.

And then Dream was *there*, and his sword followed.

The blinding heat of the sword slicing through his leg was overwhelming, and Tommy collapsed to the ground. He could feel the hot rushing sensation of the blood running down his leg and soaking his pants, but he didn’t have the energy to do anything about it.

The ground vibrated ever so slightly as Dream walked toward him, and Tommy forced himself to lift his head a few centimeters off of the ground, even though he would much prefer to just fall asleep and escape from the pain.

“You couldn’t even block that?” Dream asked, his voice sounding farther and farther away, “Come on, Tommy, how do you expect to survive if you can’t defend yourself? Do you just want to keep throwing people in front of you as a shield?”

Tommy didn’t want that. He didn’t want any of this.

“Dream’s awful. Don’t you forget it.”

This wasn’t right. This couldn’t be right. Dream had drugged his food. That’s why he was weak. Tommy knew he could hold his own in a sparring match, at least enough to try to make his own attack. He was never taken down this easily since he was eight years old.

This definitely wasn’t right. If Tubbo knew where he was, he’d probably come rushing like he did earlier in Pogtopia.

And as Tommy felt Dream’s arms begin picking him up, Tommy felt a new flame rekindle in his chest.

Dream wasn’t going to have him. Not this time.

It was time for Tommy Innit to fight back.

“Back again?”

Puffy smiled pleasantly, which Wilbur found infuriating. “Mr. Soot, these appointments are on your daily schedule.”

Wilbur inspected his fingernails, hoping to give off the impression of disinterest. “I just thought you’d be sick of me after that first time. Most people are.”

“I’m afraid you can’t get rid of me that quickly,” Puffy said.

Wilbur smiled. “Give it time. Everybody leaves me in the end.”

Puffy wrote something down. “Does that include your father?”

Great. They were back on *these* questions again. For not the first time, Wilbur wished that Puffy would shut up.

“If you care so much about Phil, you could always visit him. You get to learn what you want to learn, and I get to be left alone. We both win.”

Puffy matched Wilbur’s smile. “Unfortunately for you, I want to know *your* opinions on Philza Minecraft, not his own opinions on himself.”

Wilbur crossed his arms. “What do you want me to say? He was a deadbeat father who played favorites. End of story.”

Puffy hummed, not taking her eyes off Wilbur. “Who was the favorite?”

“Who do you think?”

“I can make a few guesses,” Puffy said, “But based off of your past actions, Technoblade?”

Wilbur laughed hollowly. “Give the woman a medal.”

“So, from what I understand, you resent Philza for favoring Technoblade and not giving enough attention to you,” Puffy said, “Was there anyone else in your life who left you?”

“I’m not telling you my life story, Captain,” Wilbur said, “Try again.”

“Fine.” Puffy tapped her pen against the clipboard a couple of times before crossing her legs. “Tell me about Tommy.”

Wilbur’s heart skipped a beat.

“What?” he whispered.

“Tommy,” Puffy repeated, “Tell me about him. It can be anything. Good memories, bad memories, how you feel about him. I’m not picky.”

“Tommy is *dead*,” Wilbur spat, “What more is there to say?”

Puffy tilted her head slightly. “They haven’t found a body.”

“That doesn’t mean anything.” Wilbur tightened his hand into a fist. “You’re a captain, and while I question the legitimacy of that claim, surely you’ve heard of men going missing in action.”

Puffy’s expression dropped slightly.

Wilbur smirked. “That’s what I thought.”

“Fine,” Puffy said, “You believe—”

“I *know*. ”

“—that Tommy’s dead,” Puffy continued, “How would you describe your past relationship with Tommy?”

Wilbur had half a mind to strangle the woman sitting in front of him for *daring* to question his relationship with Tommy, but for some reason, a lump rose to his throat again.

“We were brothers,” Wilbur finally said, his voice slightly quieter than usual.

“You were close,” Puffy inferred, her voice equally soft.

Wilbur smiled grimly. “We were more than that.” Anger returned, and Wilbur glowered. “But you wouldn’t understand.”

“Try me.”

If Wilbur had any weakness, it was Tommy. “We only had each other,” Wilbur explained, smiling, “He promised to never leave me, and I promised to protect him. He was mine.”

“When you say that,” Puffy said, tapping her pen again, “He was *yours*. Do you mean he belonged to you?”

“*Tommy doesn’t belong to you, Wilbur.* ”

This was actually the first time Wilbur had heard that phrased as a question before. Most of the time, someone simply told him that Tommy didn’t belong to him, and then Wilbur would rise to his own defense, saying what he always said: Wilbur was the only one there for him, and Tommy was the only one there for Wilbur.

When it was phrased as a calm question, however, Wilbur wasn’t sure what to say.

“Tommy was mine,” he repeated.

“Okay,” Puffy gave Wilbur a serious look, “So if Tommy belonged to you, does that mean you belong to anyone?”

Wilbur... Wilbur had never thought about that before.

“I-I guess we belong to each other,’ Wilbur said slowly, “I belong to Tommy.”

It wasn’t like Wilbur ever planned on leaving him.

“And yet the power dynamic between you and Tommy seems to be very different,” Puffy observed, “From what I can tell of both history and what other accounts have told me, you are in command of Tommy, while Tommy does not order you around.”

“I’m older,” Wilbur said easily, “I’m supposed to protect him.”

“What are you protecting him from?”

Wilbur grit his teeth in frustration. “Everything!” he exclaimed, “The world—it’s a dangerous place. He nearly got killed by a creeper when he was *six, and ever since we’ve joined this hell-hole of a nation, Tommy has already lost two more.*”

“So, you don’t want him to die,” Puffy said calmly, like she always did.

Wilbur found it infuriating, and he let out a low growl. “Of course, I don’t want Tommy to die,” he whispered, “But Tommy is already dead, and I fail to see how talking about him will do anything to help me.”

“You can’t heal a wound if you don’t know how deep it is.”

Wilbur snorted. “Is that your idea of poetry?”

“It’s my idea of the truth.”

“I once thought that there was truth in trust,” Wilbur said grimly, “And now I know there’s no point in any of it.”

Puffy’s expression seemed sympathetic, but Wilbur knew it was probably only pitying. Maybe she was thinking about what Wilbur’s sentence was inevitably going to be.

“Does that make you feel like life isn’t worth living?”

Maybe Wilbur should’ve expected that turn in the conversation. That was, after all, the main reason for Puffy coming. She was there to “fix” Wilbur’s desperation to see Tommy again.

“Life isn’t worth living,” Wilbur snarled, “Not without Tommy.”

“Did those thoughts start before or after you perceived Tommy to have died?” Puffy asked.

Wilbur hesitated. The obvious answer was after. He didn’t demand to be killed until after Dream had laughed as he explained that Tommy was dead, that he had killed himself on his own chains.

But, if Wilbur was being perfectly honest with himself, he had wanted to end it long before that. Tommy was the only reason Wilbur had stuck around as long as he had.

“Before, if you’re that desperate to know.” Wilbur dug his fingernails further into his fist.

“And this was because you had no one except Tommy?”

Wilbur rolled his eyes. “Do I really need to repeat myself?”

For some reason, Puffy still didn’t seem at all taken aback by Wilbur’s rude behavior. “No, but tell me this if you don’t mind,” Puffy said, “What do you think would happen if you died?”

Wilbur frowned. “What do you mean?”

“How do you think others would react?”

Wilbur laughed. “I’d think that’s obvious,” he said, “They’d be thrilled. Finally, the villain has been defeated! He’s gone! Nobody would have to worry about me anymore.”

There was definitely sadness on Puffy’s face now. “And you don’t think anyone would mourn?”

“Anyone who would mourn me is *dead*,” Wilbur spat.

“I don’t think that’s true.”

“Well you can keep your bloody opinions to yourself.”

Puffy nodded. “Well, there’s something I want you to think about before our next session.”

“And what is that?” Wilbur sighed, already planning to not do it. He might be forced to go to these stupid sessions, but that didn’t mean he had to do her homework.

“I want you to think of reasons to keep living,” Puffy said, “It can be anything. Maybe it’s something you want to do, maybe it’s someone you want to see, maybe it’s something about life that you enjoy.”

“This is pointless.”

“If nothing else, think of something that you *used* to enjoy out of life,” Puffy said.

Yeah, Wilbur wasn’t going to do that. Almost everything that used to make life worth living was gone now. The only thing that had been left was Tommy.

“I don’t understand you,” Punz said as he watched Dream carry Tommy out of the so-called training room.

Dream cocked his head at him in that way that always infuriated Punz, but he didn’t say anything. There wasn’t much point in insulting the person paying him in loads of resources.

“How so?” Dream asked as he carried Tommy down the hall.

“You drugged the kid,” Punz pointed out. It was pretty obvious, and Punz was surprised that the kid even continued eating after he figured it out.

“And?”

“And then you spar him?”

Dream gave Punz a thin smile as he laid Tommy down on a table and wrapped his leg up with a bandage instead of using a potion like everyone else.

“Do you know how pillagers train ravagers?” he asked.

Punz raised his eyebrows. Most of the time he just *killed* pillagers. He didn’t exactly bother to figure out their cultural habits. “No?”

“It’s simple, really,” Dream said, glancing at his communicator, “They take them as babies, and they tie a strong rope around their legs. The babies struggle, but their legs get chafed by struggling against the rope, and eventually the babies learn they can’t escape. That continues onto adulthood, and they won’t struggle against ropes or chains they could easily get out of.”

Punz glanced back at Tommy, who still had blood filtering through the thick bandage Dream had applied.

“You’re comparing the kid to a baby ravager?”

Dream sighed. “I’m *saying* that if Tommy thinks that he wasn’t drugged, and was so easily defeated by me, he’ll learn not to try it in the future.”

“So, you think he’s a threat,” Punz said. The idea of Dream being afraid of a skinny sixteen-year-old child was actually pretty funny.

Then again, Punz had met his own fair share of powerful kids in the past. Tommy was certainly among them.

“Anyone’s a threat,” Dream said, not sounding all that concerned, “I’m just using *this* threat to my advantage.”

So far, the only thing Punz had seen Dream do was break the kid to the point of looking beyond repair.

“You’re going to kill him if you’re not careful,” Punz warned, “He’s already half-starved, that potion of weakness isn’t going to improve that.”

“I’ll give him some milk soon,” Dream said dismissively, not sounding at all concerned, “I have to meet someone, guard Tommy for me.”

Punz gave Dream a stiff nod, although he doubted that Tommy would need any guarding. This entire place was such an expansive labyrinth that it was a miracle that Punz ever found his way around.

It wasn't too long until Dream came back, holding a strange looking ball and actually *putting* it into Tommy's leg before healing Tommy up with potions again.

"I'm going to take him back into his room," Dream said pleasantly.

And Punz was left to watch Dream's back retreat into one of the dark tunnels, hoping that Dream payed him extra for this crap.

Tommy woke up again feeling far more refreshed than he did before.

Unfortunately, he was back in that stupid bedroom, and it made his breathing shaky to even look at those stupid walls that were trying to close in all around him, trying to suffocate him, trying to take away all his breath—

No. Tommy had to stay calm. He had to figure out how to stop Dream.

But he was—He wasn't Tommy's friend. Friends don't drug each other. Friends don't... friends don't act like Wilbur.

Tommy weighed his options.

Running hadn't worked the first time, and it wasn't about to work this time either. Dream had clearly worked to make the maze more complicated compared to the last time Tommy had tried to sprint out of the cell, which was really saying something, considering that it had been hard enough to find Phil the first time.

Speaking of Phil, was he even still here? Dream hadn't mentioned him at all in the past couple of days, and the same could be said for Technoblade.

Had... had they escaped?

Tommy wasn't sure if that was a relief or not.

So yeah, running away wasn't going to work, and attacking Dream head on *definitely* wasn't going to work. Tommy was already weak enough, and he could still feel pain where the new wound on his leg had sealed up. Besides, Dream would probably drug him again later, and—

Wait a minute. That was it. *That was it.*

Tommy could *drug* Dream.

In fear or excitement or anticipation or whatever it was, Tommy's heart began racing as he fidget with the thin blanket on his bed, his mind going through the possibilities.

It was possible, wasn't it? Technoblade had done it to Wilbur earlier, and it had worked pretty well! Sure, Wilbur had woken up, but Tommy and Tubbo had wasted precious time arguing about things that could've waited for later.

And, admittedly, Wilbur had caught on to the fact he was being drugged pretty quickly, and Techno had clearly been trying to mask the flavor with the bitterness of the black coffee. Come to think of it, potions all had a very distinct taste, and trying to fool Dream into eating food spiked with them might be close to impossible.

Surely there were tasteless poisons out there? Hadn't Technoblade drilled him on those after Tommy had nearly eaten a berry that would've killed him instantly?

Tommy's chest felt as if it had been suddenly stabbed at the idea of actually *killing* Dream, and Tommy hastily pushed it out of his mind. He wasn't going to try to kill him. He just wanted to knock Dream out long enough for Tommy to escape.

For the next couple of hours, Tommy ran his mind through the list of poisons that he knew. There was arsenic, and that *was* in water found underground, but Tommy wasn't sure how he was going to be able to slip enough of said water into Dream's food every day, not to mention that Tommy had no way of knowing how long it would take for it to do anything.

Besides, if Tommy was being perfectly honest with himself, he wasn't actually the *best* student. He only knew what plants were poisonous because Wilbur would keep shrieking whenever Tommy went to eat something he found appetizing.

The door started opening, and Tommy jumped, bracing himself for Dream.

He wasn't his friend, he wasn't his friend, he wasn't—

"Oh," Punz said, "You're awake.

Tommy stared at Punz, his heart calming slightly. It wasn't Dream. Tommy still had time to figure out how the hell he was going to get out of here.

And suddenly, a brilliant plan came into his mind.

"I'll go get Dream—"

"No, wait!" Tommy exclaimed, jumping to his feet and wincing when fresh pain ran up his leg, "I have a deal to offer you."

Punz paused, giving Tommy a suspicious look. "Kid, I hate to be blunt, but you don't actually look like you could offer me anything I want."

"Not even a vault of full sets of netherite armor, golden apples, and more?"

Punz stiffened, his eyes widening. "You're bluffing."

Tommy grinned. Now he just had to pray he remembered where Technoblade's vault was. It shouldn't be too much of an issue. All of that cursed day haunted his nightmares.

"I'm not," he said, "Underneath the river near Pogtopia, Technoblade has a base. When there, you just go into the enchantment room, and underneath, there's a vault full of valuables."

Punz looked as though he were considering it, and he eyed Tommy. “Alright,” he conceded, “Say this place exists. What do you want in return?”

“Simple,” Tommy said, “I just want you to poison him long enough for me to escape.”

Punz frowned. “You want me to kill my client before he’s payed me?”

Tommy shook his head so quickly that his head hurt. “Not kill,” Tommy said hurriedly, “Just knock him out or get him sick or something. I don’t want—” His voice choked slightly. “—I don’t want to kill him.”

Punz tapped his fingers on his sword hilt, staring up at the ceiling. Eventually, he sighed, and said, “Fine. If this vault actually exists, I’ll help you.”

Tommy grinned. Maybe things were actually looking up after all.

Chapter End Notes

Alrighty! Day two of five days of bjar complete! Up next: Dream interlude (hopefully this will only take me one day)

This is going marvelously well, and I am optimistic that we will be half-way through the finale by the end of the week.

Hopefully

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

Dream Interlude

Chapter Summary

This interlude serves a few purposes:

- what dream has been up to
- some back story and motive
- and very light recap
- you could probably skip if you don't want to read 11k words and still mostly understand what's happening but your funeral

Chapter Notes

tw: death, blood, torture, amputation, kidnapping, possessive behavior, **UNRELIABLE NARRATOR**, starvation, chains, bombs, explosions, terrorism, stabbing, arguing, surgery sorta, broken friendships,

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

At seventeen years old, Dream had successfully killed the Ender Dragon, finishing the manhunt, an important part of a ruler of the SMP's ascension.

George and Sapnap congratulated him, although they looked a little disappointed. It was understandable. If the hunters actually had managed to stop Dream and killed the dragon themselves, they would've had their own chance at leadership.

"You weren't quite fast enough," Dream said cockily, grinning at the others.

George rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah," he said, "We all knew that you were going to win anyway, Dream. No need to get a big head over it."

"Time to head back?" Sapnap offered, glancing at the portal back to the overworld.

Dream followed his line of sight, but instead of looking at the portal, his eyes landed on the dragon egg instead.

"Actually..."

"What are you doing?" Sapnap demanded as Dream went toward the egg, reaching out for it.

"What does it look like I'm doing?" Dream asked.

“It looks like you’re picking up the dragon egg that is supposed to stay here,” George remarked, always a fan of stating the obvious.

Dream rolled his eyes. “Well, when you say it like that, you make it look bad.”

“Maybe that’s because it *is* a bad idea,” Sapnap said.

Dream ignored him, grabbing the egg with both hands and—

It teleported to a few yards away, landing in between a gaggle of endermen with a thump.

Dream swore under his breath.

“It clearly does not want you to pick it up,” George said.

“Oh, come on,” Dream complained, “Let me try one more time.”

“Why do you even want the egg so badly anyway?” Sapnap demanded.

“Think about it,” Dream said, “The SMP is already pretty powerful, but if we manage to train a dragon to our will?”

“There’d be no stopping us,” Sapnap said, his eyes widening.

“Exactly,” Dream said.

George frowned. “But without the egg, how are we supposed to do the ceremony for future rulers?”

“We can do the ceremony in the overworld,” Dream said, “It’s not that big of a deal.”

“Yeah, except you can’t pick up the egg,” Sapnap said.

Dream frowned, approaching the egg again. “I’m sure there’s some way to do it.”

His fingers brushed against the hard surface, and this time the egg teleported right above the end portal, falling straight down in to the overworld.

They optimistically hoped that they could find it outside of the portal at the stronghold, but they were not so lucky.

“I can’t believe this,” George moaned, “We *lost* the dragon egg.”

“Keep your voice down,” Dream hissed, “We’ll just… hope it teleports back into the End. Nobody will know, the End is strictly banned with the exception of these ceremonies anyway.”

They never did find the egg. George and Sapnap searched everywhere, and even Dream participated in the search, even though he was also trying to run an entire kingdom at the same time.

But no matter how hard they tried, the egg was nowhere to be found.

If there was one bright side of that mortifying situation, *Drista* had found it hilarious.

“You *lost* the dragon egg?” she demanded, laughing hysterically, “You lost one of the most valuable things known to mankind?”

“This isn’t actually funny,” Dream had said tiredly, “Don’t you realize what this means?”

“It means that you’re an idiot,” Drista said simply, sitting down on top of Dream’s desk, “Don’t worry. If you still can’t find it within the next few years, I’ll just cheat and give you one.”

Dream glanced at the tattoo on Drista’s palm, which was shimmering slightly in the sunlight. “You don’t know you’ll be able to do that.”

“And you don’t know that I *can’t*,” Drista said cheerfully.

Dream sighed, glancing back down at his work. “Just... try not to become a goddess too soon, okay?”

There was only one way for a chosen to become a full-fledged deity, and Dream didn’t actually look forward to seeing his little sister die.

“Don’t worry,” she said cheerfully, “I’m sure you’re doing an excellent job protecting me in this fancy castle and with your fancy armies and your fancy ender dragon—”

Dream felt heat rise up to his face. “Drista,” he said warningly.

“Yes?”

“Get out of my office.”

Drista gasped dramatically, jumping off the desk and giving Dream an exaggerated bow. “Why, of course, your *majesty*.”

“If you keep calling me that, I’m going to start calling you the chosen one.”

“Oh, yes, that would be great,” Drista said excitedly, “Please, I would love that.”

Dream sighed. “No.”

Drista scowled. “Why not?”

“Because you’ll be called a goddess for centuries after this, I don’t need to inflate your ego now.”

Drista slumped slightly, but she put on a cheeky grin right after that. “Well, I suppose you have enough of an ego for the both of us.”

Dream squawked indignantly, throwing his quill in her direction. The quill only made it half-way across the room, and Drista laughed, slamming the door shut behind her, hopefully off to terrorize someone who wasn't important.

When Dream was eighteen and Drista was fourteen, the inevitable happened.

Dream and Drista were taking an innocent walk through one of the nearby forests. A few monsters had spawned nearby, but for the most part, it wasn't too much of an issue. Both Dream and Drista were well trained enough to not be bothered by a few skeletons that were trying to kill them.

"We should have a competition," Drista was saying light-heartedly, spinning one of her arrows like a baton, "See which one of us can kill the most."

"That sounds like a waste of arrows," Dream said, "Maybe we could just have a nice, peaceful walk."

Drista huffed. "Well that sounds really boring."

"I'm a boring person."

"Obviously."

Dream returned his attention away from Drista and back to the path, not wanting to accidentally walk straight into a tree. Drista continued to chatter meaninglessly, but Dream tried his best to pay attention.

Dream was considering turning back and heading back home as she started a story about Sapnap accidentally setting her painting on fire.

"He just came in there while the painter was working, saying: oh, what's up? Do you have anything to burn? So, I said: Yes, actual—"

Drista's voice got suddenly muffled and agitated, and Dream spun around, knocking an arrow.

Drista was being held by a taller looking assassin, their hand covering her mouth.

Dream didn't hesitate. He let the arrow fly straight toward their head.

The attacker grinned, and suddenly a sword was protruding from Drista's stomach before being suddenly yanked out again.

Dream screamed as his arrow hit the assassin in the forehead, and he collapsed, dead.

Dream didn't waste any time on him, though, instead sprinting over to Drista, who was collapsed on the ground, blood staining her shirt.

He collapsed to his knees, bringing Drista into his arms as he tried to find a potion or *something* in his inventory.

There wasn't any. Dream didn't have *any* potions. Why wouldn't he have brought potions? Was he really so stupid that he didn't think of that?

"Oh my god," Dream whispered, "Oh my god, oh my god—"

Drista mustered up a pained grin. "Eh, it'll be okay."

"It'll be *okay*?" Dream demanded, his voice bordering on hysterical as his eyes burned with tears, "Drista, you're—"

"Dying, I know," she said, gasping for breath, "But—I'll be back."

No, *no, no, no*. Dream wasn't supposed to lose her so soon. Dream was supposed to have more *time*.

Her body went limp, and Dream screamed.

Ever since that day, Dream always made sure to have potions on him at all times. Nothing every good came from being unprepared.

When Dream was nineteen, Dream saw Drista for the first time after her death.

Dream had just returned from a recreational manhunt with George and Sapnap, the goal being to get enough materials to theoretically go to the end, since they couldn't exactly go there anymore. He was exhausted, and he was in desperate need of a shower before he did anything else.

Instead of getting a shower like he had planned, however, Dream found himself face to face with his little sister, who was *floating* outside of the fifth-floor window.

If Dream screamed, nobody could really blame him.

Drista was wearing clothing much more fitting of a new god, and she was wearing a mask almost identical to XD's mask.

"Hi!" she said cheerfully, breaking the glass of the window and welcoming herself inside.

"Drista?" Dream whispered, hardly able to believe it. The memory of her limp in his arms burned, and he forced it back down.

"Yep!" she said cheerfully, "That's me! I'm a god now, isn't that cool?"

Dream swallowed, pushing back the tears that were tempted to spill out of his eyes. He just had to put on a mask. There was no point in crying over what couldn't be changed.

"Drista, we always knew you were going to be a god."

"Yeah, but now I'm *actually* a god," Drista said, holding a tone like she might be rolling her eyes.

"Why are you wearing that mask?" Dream asked, suddenly bothered by the fact that he couldn't see Drista's face.

"Oh, that," Drista said, sounding slightly annoyed, "Well, *apparently*, my godly power is too much for most mortals, so you can't look me full on in the face without, you know dying."

Come to think of it, that would explain why all of the deities that Dream knew of had some sort of face covering.

"I like the mask," Drista continued, "Oh, but you should've seen the goddess of death. She had the *prettiest* veil covering her face, like she was at a funeral or something."

"That would make sense," Dream said dryly, "Considering that she is, in fact, the goddess of death."

"Ew, death," Drista said, sticking her tongue out, "Fortunately for me, I have a much better designation."

Dream felt his interest pique. They always did used to theorize what Drista would be the goddess of. "Yeah?"

"I am in charge of chaos," Drista said happily, "I can basically do whatever I want within reason."

Dream swallowed awkwardly. "So... could you get us a new dragon egg?"

Drista's demeanor suddenly lost all of it's cheerfulness. "Oh," she said quietly, "Sorry, I should've explained."

Dread stirred in Dream's stomach. "Explained what?"

"I can't actually... interfere," she said, "or help with important things like that."

"Why not?" Dream demanded.

Drista shrugged. "It's the rules? I think the gods don't want certain people to be overpowered if there's a certain god favoring them."

Dream scowled. "So, if I'm in any serious danger, you won't be able to do anything to help?"

Drista jerked back slightly. "No, I'm sorry—"

“You’d just let me die?”

“It’s not *my* fault,” Drista snapped, “If I interfere too much, they’ll stick me in god prison or something, and contrary to what you might think, I don’t particularly want to spend centuries in a cell.”

All of the anger drained out of Dream, and he sighed. “You’re right,” he said, “That wasn’t fair of me, sorry.”

Drista huffed, crossing her arms. “It’s fine,” she sighed, “Anyway, visits like these aren’t going to happen too often, sorry.”

“It’s fine,” Dream said, “Just visit when you can, yeah?”

Drista nodded. “Of course.”

Drista really didn’t visit that often. The most she had ever visited in a year was maybe ten times, and that was the first year of her reappearance into Dream’s life. Ever since then, it had only been really three times a year.

Dream adjusted to Drista’s constant absence, however, and he reminded himself that it could be much worse. Drista could’ve been in charge of something that prevented her from being able to see Dream at all.

Still, every time Drista refused to help her with something that could’ve been easily fixed by whatever powers he had, Dream felt himself growing more and more frustrated. Why didn’t the gods want to make life easier for humanity? Did they really just hate mortals that much? Were they really that indifferent?

Time and time again, Dream needed help, and time and time again, Drista said no.

Who cared anyway? Who cared if they were gods? If they weren’t going to do anything *helpful*, why were they even around anyway? It felt like a waste.

If Dream had been chosen, he could’ve done more. He would’ve helped. He would’ve made the world a safe place for everyone. His people wouldn’t have suffered. Nobody would’ve gotten killed under his rule again.

But Dream wasn’t a god.

He tried not to let his frustration show in front of Drista. Despite it all, she was still Dream’s sister, and Dream cared about her.

Still, Dream’s frustration only grew when she refused to help with the L’manberg Revolution.

“I can’t help you, Dream,” Drista said, sounding impatient herself this time, “That’s how it’s always been, and that’s who it will always be. It’s not my fault that you decided to start a war because someone was sick of your stupid laws.”

“My laws aren’t stupid,” Dream snapped.

“I don’t know,” Drista said doubtfully, “Some of them were. Besides, at the very least, you could’ve just granted L’manberg more freedoms before it escalated to this.”

“How long would it have been before Soot wanted it all?” Dream demanded, “While you might not understand how difficult it is to hold onto power, I do, and I can’t afford to show weakness.”

“Yeah, and I think that’s pretty stupid of you.”

They continued arguing for a bit, and it ended with Drista disappearing in a fit of anger. That was the last time Dream saw Drista for a good few months.

Things only got worse and worse after Wilbur’s revolution. Only more war followed L’manberg, and the other people in his kingdom were questioning Dream himself, especially after he made Eret king automatically, completely disregarding any traditions.

Dream did what he could to keep a hold of his power. It was the only way he could do *any* good, after all, and the last thing he needed was to have no hold over anyone.

He kept a firm grip on Eret’s decisions. He provided Wilbur with the TNT destroy L’manberg or Manberg or whatever it was being called these days, which was becoming more and more of a threat every day. He started ridding himself of his attachments, knowing that they could only be used against him. He exiled Tommy, hoping to use the boy to his own advantage.

Because that was the only way to hold onto power, and power was the only way to get anything done.

And Dream was better than those stupid gods, just sitting around and watching. Dream was actually *doing* something with his power.

Still, after Tommy escaped exile, Dream knew that he had let things go out of hand far too quickly. He shouldn’t have let things get this far in the first place. Maybe if he had just killed Wilbur and Tommy before they had become pains in his side, things would be simpler.

Dream probably could salvage the mess of the situation, but if Tommy and Technoblade properly allied against him, Dream would not be surprised if he found himself dead in his bed.

If only there was some way to turn back time and start again. Maybe then, Dream wouldn’t be stupid enough to touch the dragon egg, instead leaving it alone. Maybe that time, Dream could stop Drista from dying, giving her at least a few more years before she became a god and started her journey to not care for anyone.

Maybe then, Dream could stop Wilbur from ever bringing up the idea of the revolution in the first place. He could stop everyone from rallying next to Tommy, who somehow inspired *everyone* to join any cause.

The idea was ludicrous. There was no such thing as time travel.

And then Dream remembered the book.

Schlatt was drunk as hell at the time when he went to speak to Dream, convincing Dream not to join Pogtopia in destroying Manberg.

“I have this book,” he said, pulling a book with golden embellishes from his inventory, “I can’t read a word of it, but it probably has some pretty cool stuff in it. I’m pretty sure it teaches people the power of revival.”

Well, if that hadn’t captured Dream’s attention, nothing else would have.

Dream had been translating the book for a while now, and unfortunately, there was nothing about revival in its pages so far. Dream was sure it was somewhere in there, but translating the enchantment table language was exhausting, and Dream wasn’t a miracle worker.

Most of the book was an expansive history of the myths surrounding the gods. Dream doubted that most of the stories in there were true.

Still, if it was true that the book had the secrets to revival, maybe it would have the secrets to time travel as well.

And so, instead of spending a few hours out of his day to read the book like he usually did, Dream spent a full twenty-four hours translating it page by page until *finally* he reached the information he needed.

Time Travel.

The first passage talked about how this time travel was a method of moving the soul from place to place in the timeline, as opposed to both the body and the soul. It explained that if one were to place their soul into the body of their past self, their past soul would either die, or it would simply move to the future that the time traveler left behind.

To some, that information might seem boring or unnecessary, but Dream soaked in every word. The last thing he needed was to die doing complicated magic.

The next few passages warned that this version of time travel magic was complicated, and that even a wrong spoken syllable could cause countless unknown issues, such as making it impossible for others to time travel, landing in the wrong time, or even forcing other souls to time travel with them.

Dream made note of every one of those things. He didn’t think it would be too much of an issue, however. Dream never had trouble speaking clearly.

All that was left was to translate the incantation and instructions, which were pretty straightforward, if Dream was being honest.

Dream found a totem of undying, and he held tightly onto it as he said the words in a language lost to history.

There was a flash of bright light, and he passed out.

When Dream woke up, he found himself in his bedroom in the palace.

That in itself wasn't a good way of telling if Dream had *actually* managed to make it as far back as he needed to be.

So, with a sigh, Dream heaved himself out of his bed, glancing at his communicator for the date.

His heart dropped.

October ninth.

Dream had only gone back a few *months*.

It took everything Dream had not to throw his communicator at the wall in that moment.

Dream could still make this work. Distrust should already be brewing in Manberg. Niki would at the very least be making sure of that.

If Dream could make Manberg feel completely unsafe around Schlatt, the people would flock back to the peace and safety of the SMP, which meant that Dream would be able to keep them back under his protection.

Of course, there was also the issue of Wilbur and Tommy. Wilbur wanted nothing more to just destroy Manberg, and Tommy, well, he wasn't going to be the same boy that Dream had spent time and effort into molding.

If worst came to worst, Dream could kill them both. For now, however, Dream wanted to hold off on that option. Technoblade was still with Manberg, and once again, Dream didn't fully trust himself to be able to defeat him.

Dream could still manipulate Wilbur and Tommy to his advantage. Technoblade, too, only wanted nothing more than to destroy the government, which meant, at the moment, he and Dream had a common goal. The only problem came when Technoblade wanted to abolish Dream's power.

Dream set that problem aside for later. He had other things to worry about.

His communicator was still in his hands, and he quickly sent a message to Wilbur.

Dream: I'll come with more TNT tomorrow

He had work to do.

Tommy was quieter than Dream expected.

Back during Pogtopia, Dream had very distinct memories of Tommy swearing at him, telling him to stop helping Wilbur with the plan to blow up Manberg, even pointing a crossbow at them.

But this Tommy wasn't even speaking at all. He was instead standing stiffly at attention, as though he were trying to *hide* something.

What had caused Tommy to act so strangely? Wilbur was the same as he ever was.

Tommy was acting more like the Tommy Dream himself had exiled than the Tommy who was determined to stop Wilbur from mass destruction at all costs.

Was it possible that Dream hadn't only messed up where he had landed in time? Had he accidentally pulled others with him as well?

Dream brought it up with Wilbur, who mentioned that he also thought it was a pleasant surprise. So, whatever it was, Wilbur clearly didn't know about it.

"Maybe when all this is said and done, Tommy won't get exiled again," Dream said, trying to see if Tommy would react to that.

Wilbur responded in the negative, clearly protective of his baby brother, although that was nothing new.

Tommy, however, became as white as a sheet, and he instantly asked to be excused from the room.

Dream grinned. Maybe Tommy was from the future after all. That could prove incredibly useful for Dream to execute his plans.

"Why don't you stay?" he asked, "I thought you wanted to keep an eye on me?"

Tommy stiffened, and he gave Dream a look that was clearly a mix of horror and hopefulness.

"You're homeless, you don't get to tell me what to do," he said, his voice trembling in that way it did when he was lying to Dream, "I want to speak to Techno."

Wilbur burst into hysterics as Tommy hurried away from the both of them.

The grin on Dream's face grew wider, and he found himself suddenly laughing alongside Wilbur.

The homeless comment was definitely from Technoblade after Tommy ran away from exile.

Tommy *was* from the future.

Dream could *definitely* take advantage of this.

After sewing more seeds of paranoia into Wilbur, Dream left. Wilbur already struggled with trusting him, the last thing he needed was to make Wilbur think that he was planning something, which, of course, he was.

Still, he came back the next day. The more enthusiasm he showed toward Wilbur's cause, the more likely Wilbur was to trust him.

When Dream came to Pogtopia, however, he found none other than Quackity and Fundy facing off against him, looking surprised to see him there.

Dream himself was surprised, but he knew better than to make it look like he didn't have full control over the situation.

"Well, this was unexpected," Dream said smoothly, "What brings you boys here?"

Fundy was already drawing his sword and pointing it at Dream, demanding that he get out of the way.

Dream was uninterested in doing that.

Instead, he hummed, saying, "'You know, I would. Except you haven't exactly told me what you're doing here, so for all I know, you're going to hurt someone.'"

Quackity grabbed his own sword at that. "The opposite," he said, "We're going to rescue some children. So, if you would just step aside, that would be greatly appreciated."

Dream had to give it to Quackity. He really knew how to keep some of his manners in a threatening situation, even if he was just being sarcastic.

Dream started fighting the two of them, wondering how Wilbur managed to get his hands on Tubbo so quickly after deciding that he was a traitor.

Still, Dream was winning, and as soon as he disposed of the two of them, he could figure out what was going on himself.

And then Technoblade had to come in.

Fighting Technoblade was much more difficult than fighting Quackity and Fundy combined.

Dream felt frustration grow in him as he saw Tubbo get rescued by Fundy, and then Tommy dragged away by Quackity soon after.

But then Tommy did something useful.

He *screamed* for Technoblade.

It wasn't that hard to stab Technoblade when he was distracted.

Tommy still managed to get away, much to Dream's frustration, but Dream was nothing if not an opportunist.

And there was plenty of opportunity in having Technoblade at his mercy.

A few things became painfully apparent as Dream and Wilbur kept Technoblade prisoner and worked on their new base.

First, Schlatt was certainly from the future, and the future had made him a *changed* man. Why else would he not be imprisoning or killing Tommy on site? Why else would he get sober? Why else would he have actually been worried about Tubbo?

It was strange, though, because Dream hadn't even seen Schlatt in the future. Had he been a ghost like Ghostbur?

There wasn't much point in dwelling on it. The fact that Schlatt was from the future was difficult enough.

Second, Technoblade was not going to be manipulated.

Dream was sure that with enough time; he could cause Technoblade to bend to his side, to finally understand that Dream was the only one fit to lead others, that Dream was only trying to do what the gods refused to.

But it was clearly going to take a ridiculously long time. Even after Wilbur had taken Dream's subtle suggestion and cut off his finger, Technoblade housed too much anger toward Dream to be manipulated yet.

So, Dream went to the simpler method of controlling someone.

Attachments.

It was amusing to see the fear in Technoblade's eyes when he realized exactly what Dream was willing to do to Tommy. It was amusing to know that Technoblade would be much easier to control after this.

It was funny how it all came back to Tommy. Wilbur wanted nothing more than to get Tommy back. Technoblade wanted nothing more than to keep Tommy away.

Dream wanted nothing more than to stop Tommy from ruining everything like he was so apt to do.

Fortunately, Tommy had a few attachments of his own.

Dream could've used the discs, but familial bonds were far stronger than any object could ever be.

The only problem was the question of delivering the finger. Schlatt was likely on high alert for any sign of Dream, which was wise, considering that Dream wanted to destabilize his government and gain full control over Manberg.

And Wilbur didn't even know that Dream planned on delivering the finger straight to Tommy, instead naïvely believing that Dream was sending it to Schlatt instead.

Dream needed to find someone who would trust him while simultaneously having access to the white house.

Then it clicked. The laughably simple solution.

George.

Dream messaged George to meet him in the outskirts of the forest, a decent way away from any of Schlatt's scouts.

George was understandably confused by the request, but Dream only said that he had something he wanted to deliver Tommy. Hopefully, George would be as out of date as he always was, and he wouldn't find any reason to mistrust Dream.

Fortunately, George didn't continue questioning Dream, and their meeting went exactly as planned.

"Hey, man," George had said as he approached, smiling like he always had.

While Dream may have changed over the years, George had not.

"Hi," Dream said, forcing himself to put on the friendship charade, "How's it going?"

While Dream may have cut ties with George in the future, this George still thought that Dream was his friend, and there was no point in ruining that.

"Pretty good," he said, "I've been living with Sam, and it's pretty quiet, but I like it. How about you?"

Dream found himself relaxing instinctively, although his mind clung to that one detail. *Sam*. He might be useful later.

"I'm glad," he said, "My life's been—" He laughed. "—well, it's been pretty hectic lately, but what can one expect, you know?"

George laughed. "Yeah, I know what you mean. Maybe you should live with me. It's pretty nice back there."

A small amount of bitterness wormed its way into Dream's heart.

Because a small part of him did want to go with George. A small part of him wanted to forget this whole quest for power, the whole goal to take over, this whole idea that he could do better than the gods. A small part of him just wanted to live a peaceful life where he could be *happy*.

But Dream couldn't be selfish. Dream had a purpose, and he had people relying on him, and he wasn't going to abandon them just so that he could spend time with a friend he had already cut ties with.

"Maybe one day," he said.

"Yeah," George said, his voice slightly more subdued as he stuffed his hands into his pockets, "Anyway, you said you had something for me to deliver to Tommy?"

Dream nodded, pulling the box out of his inventory. "Yeah, I heard he wasn't doing too well, so I thought I'd get him something to cheer him up, you know?"

George nodded, taking the box from Dream's hands. "That's really sweet of you," he said, beginning to open it.

"Wait!" Dream shouted, maybe a little too loudly.

George froze, staring up at Dream with shock.

"Sorry," Dream said, putting on an awkward grin and rubbing the back of his neck, "It's just a really fancy desert, and it'll get ruined if you open the box."

George's eyes widened, his mouth forming into a little 'o' as he nodded like the gullible person he was. "Oh," he said, "Should I, um, put it in the fridge?"

"Yeah," Dream said, "It'll go in the freezer, actually, and I only want you to give it to Tommy after he's come out of his room. Almost like a, 'glad to see you back on your feet' gift."

George nodded. "Okay, that seems simple enough. I'll have to hangout more at Manberg, but there are worse things in life."

"Yeah," Dream said, his mind rushing through the different ways Tommy could see the 'gift', "Maybe put it on the windowsill, that way he doesn't know it's from you or from me."

"Oh, like a secret gifter!" George exclaimed, somehow sounding excited about this, "That reminds me of that time Drista..." He trailed off, looking awkward. "Sorry."

"It's fine," Dream said curtly, "Call me after you deliver it."

George called him a few days later, sounding pleased with himself.

"I put it on the windowsill," he said, "He didn't see me, but he definitely heard me, so I bet he's opening it up right now."

The idea of Tommy opening up the box and understanding just how many people he put at risk every single day gave Dream a small thrill. Maybe this would be the first step to progress.

“That’s great, thanks George,” he said, actually genuine, “I’ll talk to you later, okay?”

“Yep.”

Dream hung up the communicator on George.

Wilbur was in another room, so Dream waited for a few minutes before pulling out his communicator and calling Tubbo.

He would’ve called Tommy, but Wilbur still had his communicator, so there wasn’t much point in that.

Tubbo didn’t answer the call, however. Instead, it was Schlatt.

If Dream hadn’t been sure before, he was certain now. Schlatt was from the future, and he *knew* what Dream had been trying to achieve during Tommy’s exile.

Fortunately, it only took threatening Technoblade again to make Schlatt hand the communicator back to Tommy.

This was Dream’s first chance to speak one on one to Tommy since he time traveled. Every word he said was vital to convincing Tommy back to his side.

“Hello Tommy,” Dream said pleasantly, “It’s been a long time, hasn’t it?”

“Where’s Techno?” Tommy said shortly.

He was resisting.

But he was fragile.

“That’s a rude way to address your friend,” Dream said, layering on his disappointment, “I thought I taught you better than that.”

This time, Tommy’s reply was less immediate, and Dream knew that he was getting to him.

“You’re not my friend,” he said, “You just want to control me, and it’s not going to work.”

Well, Tommy had the first part correct, but it *was* going to work.

They went back and forth like that for a while, and eventually, Dream’s impatience got the better of him.

“Tommy, I’m waiting,” he said, waiting for an apology for his rudeness.

“Fine,” Tommy said, “I’m sorry.”

Dream smiled; it certainly took him long enough. “For?”

“I’m sorry for being ungrateful,” Tommy said, sounding somewhat like he was reciting a script, “It was wrong of me. You were only trying to be a good friend.”

Dream's smile grew wider. "Good boy," he said, knowing that Tommy soaked up praise like a sponge, "Now, next week, I'm going to send Tubbo a time and coordinates. You and Tubbo are to come unarmed and alone. If you don't, I'm cutting Techno's legs off."

Dream would never actually cut Technoblade's legs off, but it was a threat that would certainly get Tommy rushing to agree.

Tubbo was a bonus, another person to keep Tommy in line if anything went wrong.

Tommy agreed, and Dream ended the call, feeling more satisfied than he had in a while. Things were actually going according to plan.

Everything only went better from there.

Dream called Sam, ordering a small, highly-lethal bomb he could put in Technoblade, although he didn't tell Sam that last part for obvious reasons. Sam seemed somewhat suspicious, but Dream offered a good price, and since Sam seemed just as uninformed as George, he agreed.

Later that day, Tommy actually called Dream himself, and Dream took that opportunity to continue swaying Tommy back toward him.

Technoblade wasn't happy with him, but Dream didn't particularly care about that.

As a matter of fact, Dream mainly cared about the fact that Wilbur was visiting Technoblade. And while Dream was pretty sure that Technoblade hadn't told anything that might break Dream's hold on Wilbur, Dream didn't want to suffer the risk.

Wilbur wasn't going to accept it if Dream just told him to stop visiting Technoblade. As a matter of fact, that was probably only going to encourage Wilbur to visit Technoblade more.

So, instead, Dream left the door slightly open as he left Technoblade's cell, giving Technoblade the perfect window to escape.

If Technoblade escaped because of the visits, the only logical conclusion was to stop visiting.

Admittedly, Dream hadn't planned on getting killed half-way through Technoblade's escape attempt, but he supposed he should've expected it.

Fortunately, the wound wasn't too complicated, and the respawn went much more smoothly than if Dream's entire body had been in a bad state.

He managed to catch up with Technoblade, just as planned, and he did what he needed to do.

Dream dragged Technoblade back to their base, and Wilbur seemed somewhat uncomfortable at the discovery.

That was Wilbur's problem, although Dream would have to keep an eye on it. The last thing Dream needed was for him to lose his grip on someone as unstable as Wilbur.

Still, Dream was a busy man, and he had to pick the bomb up from Sam before he did anything else.

He met Sam in the same spot he met George, and he handed the bomb and its button over without any resistance. Dream, in turn, handed over the redstone blocks Sam requested.

"Oh, and one more thing," Dream said after they had finished the exchange, "Could you start working on a prosthetic arm for me?"

Sam frowned. "What do you need one of those for?"

"A friend," Dream said simply.

Sam wasn't a particularly nosy person. He hadn't asked too many questions when Dream had commissioned him for the prison, and he wasn't going to ask too many questions now.

"The price will be higher," Sam said simply.

"I can manage."

They shook on it, and Dream headed back to their base, drinking an invisibility potion on his way there.

The last thing he needed was to kill some interfering scouts.

And then Dream saw none other than Philza Minecraft, looking as though he was investigating one of the entrances to their base.

Philza was a good fighter, Dream had to give him that.

But Dream was better.

After all, if one wanted to hold the power of a god, one had to train to fight like a god.

Dream was giving Philza his own little comfy cell when he received messages from George.

What was it now?

Sighing, Dream slammed the iron door to Philza's cell shut and looked down at the messages, hoping that it would be something useful.

George: Dream

George: Dream, I need you to tell me the truth

George: Did you

George: Did you send Tommy Technoblade's finger???

Damnit.

Dream had hoped that nobody would connect the crime to George, whether it be out of some petty sentimentality or to stay out of George's wrath. But it didn't take all that much guesswork to figure out that George would be one of the few people to actually do anything Dream said, so Dream should've seen it coming.

It was funny. Dream prepared for every outcome he could think of, but then something inconsequential caught him off guard, like an old friend discovering that Dream wasn't who he said he was.

Well, Dream's rise to power did involve cutting off all attachments. There was no point in holding onto something that was never meant to be anyway.

He ignored the messages.

George: Dream, answer me

George: answer me damnit

Dream resisted the urge to throw the communicator against the wall, not sure why he felt so *angry* all of the sudden.

It was as though he were frustrated that he couldn't have George, because even if it was just a lie, Dream wasn't sure he'd be able to let him die like all the others.

Dream wondered how Drista could do it. How could Drista just watch? How could she live with herself?

Well, Drista was immortal now. Maybe it wasn't really a form of living.

If Phil found Dream and Wilbur's base, it was only a matter of time before the rest of the Manbergian's found it as well, and Dream wasted no time working on expanding his labyrinth.

Then, three hours later, Dream heard the sound of someone walking down the hallway.

After further investigation, it was obvious as to who it was.

"Hello, Tommy."

Tommy didn't fight back. Tommy just stood there as Dream spoke to him, thanking him for finally seeing sense, for finally coming back to Dream's side.

Tommy didn't look like he wanted to be there, but that was okay. He would learn.

"Everything in the hole, Tommy."

Tommy obeyed.

Dream smiled.

Tommy was *his*.

Dream had been careless.

Technoblade had escaped, killed by Wilbur's own blade, because of Dream's carelessness.

He should've kept a better eye on Wilbur. He should've made sure that Wilbur wasn't visiting Technoblade behind his back. Dream should've been more careful.

But he hadn't, and now Technoblade was out of his reach.

Dream nearly threw it all the way in that moment, so lost in his temper that he shouted at Wilbur, demanding to know if he had realized how *stupid* he had been.

But Wilbur had only gotten more and more defensive, and Dream realized how close he was to letting Wilbur slip through his fingers.

So, Dream calmed down. He took some deep breaths. He forced himself to apologize, even though Wilbur had just removed one of Dream's most useful assets.

Dream still had Tommy. Dream still had Philza. He could work with this.

"Dream," Wilbur said, his voice still cold and completely untrusting, "What do you know about Logstedshire?"

Dream froze. How did Wilbur know about Logstedshire? Dream hadn't told anyone about Logstedshire.

Still, Dream couldn't break. He could still salvage this.

"What the heck is a Logstedshire?" Dream asked, layering on his confusion, "Is that a drink or something?"

"It's a place," Wilbur said, sounding slightly more doubtful now.

If Dream wasn't afraid that smiling would've ruined his façade, he would've.

"I can't say I've heard it. Where'd you hear it from?"

Wilbur was drumming his fingers against the table. "Nobody of importance."

'Nobody of importance' probably just meant Technoblade.

"You can't believe everything you hear, Wilbur," Dream said, trying to sound slightly sympathetic, "People lie, you know?"

"Like you?" Wilbur snapped.

Exactly like him.

“I’m not lying to you.”

“Maybe not now,” Wilbur said, “But you have before.”

Dream forced himself to shrug nonchalantly as he walked away. “They say change comes with the seasons, or something like that.”

“People change like tides in the ocean,” Drista used to say, mocking him when he complained about how annoying she had suddenly gotten since she was a baby.

Maybe that was true for Dream most of all.

Maybe Dream didn’t care.

After leaving a message for the people searching for Tommy, Dream called Tubbo, who offered *himself* for Tommy’s sake.

Tubbo was clearly from the future as well.

And if Dream wasn’t going to accept such a convenient deal, then he would’ve been a fool.

There were still a good few days before Tubbo sacrificed himself, however, which was fine. As always, Dream had other things he needed to get done.

He may have lost Technoblade, but he could still put the bomb in Philza’s wing. After making sure that Philza was appropriately knocked unconscious, he ripped out some of the feathers and surgically implanted the bomb.

He splashed a healing potion all over the injury afterward. With any luck, Philza shouldn’t be able to notice that anything was wrong at all.

A few hours later, Dream found Tommy untying Philza from his ropes.

Dream wasn’t sure *how* Tommy managed to escape, but Dream was going to make sure it *never* happened again. Tommy belonged to Dream now, and nothing Tommy could do could stop this truth.

Tommy screamed and shouted, undoubtedly alerting Wilbur, but Dream managed to drag Tommy away and shove him back into his cell.

He managed to reach Philza’s cell in time to see Wilbur about to open the door and began the task of convincing Wilbur he hadn’t heard something he had, in fact, heard.

“But, I heard him. He was crying for help. I-I heard him.”

Dream sighed, trying to sound as pitying as possible. “I think I know what this is.”

Wilbur looked suspiciously up at Dream, relaxing his death-grip on his hair.

“You’re feeling guilty for what Technoblade’s probably doing to Tommy now that he’s escaped,” Dream continued, “I understand, I sometimes think I still hear my sister, but that’s a story for another time—”

Dream felt a pull in his chest at the mention of Drista, but he knew this was the only way he was going to have any hope of getting through to Wilbur.

“Your sister?”

“It’s a long story,” Dream said quietly, “She’s dead now.”

It wasn’t a lie. The Drista Dream knew and loved died in his arms. Her replacement was just an echo, one that didn’t care about the world she used to hold so much passion for.

As Dream predicted, it was enough to convince Wilbur that Tommy wasn’t there, and Wilbur backed off.

Dream chained up Tommy after that, ignoring the boy’s pleas to have mercy.

Maybe Tommy would finally learn.

And maybe Dream wouldn’t be forced to see him die too.

Dream was losing his grip on Wilbur, that much was obvious.

So, Dream went to one of the few people he *knew* wouldn’t say no to whatever Dream had to ask.

“You want me to work for you?” Punz asked, sounding skeptical.

Dream nodded. “Think about it,” he said, “I’ll be able to pay you plenty, and it’ll at the very least give you something to do.”

Punz gave Dream a strange look. “Yeah, except all of Manberg is after your head, and I don’t think the SMP is far behind. How’d that even happen anyway?”

Dream smiled thinly. Clearly, him being so distracted was detrimental to his hold on Eret.

“Eret’s in charge now,” Dream said, “I only give him suggestions.”

It was easier to get work done when you weren’t bound to a palace.

Punz raised his eyebrows, but he didn’t say anything else on the matter. “I mean, I could always use a job,” he said, “When do you want me to begin?”

Dream’s communicator buzzed, and he quickly glanced down at it, seeing a message from George.

George: Can we talk? You can choose the meeting place

Dream grinned grimly. It was an obvious trap.

If George had decided to take this path, who was Dream to stop him?

Dream: Yeah, of course. Here's the coordinates.

“Actually, can you go to these coordinates?” Dream said, showing Punz the coordinates he had typed in on his communicator, “I want you to plant TNT underneath a solid amount of earth there.”

Punz glanced at the communicator. “Are you providing the TNT?”

“Of course,” Dream scoffed, “Here, I’ll take you to my base. That way you’ll know where to go when I’m done.”

Dream did so, showing Punz the chest that he and Wilbur filled with leftover TNT.

“Speaking of Wilbur,” Dream said, “I should check on him.”

The last time Dream hadn’t seen Wilbur in a solid number of hours, Wilbur had somehow managed to learn more about the future.

Dream made his way down the hallways and into an empty room and found Wilbur staring at a newspaper in his hands, giggling.

Prime, the last thing Dream needed was for Wilbur to read a newspaper. That was a great way for Wilbur to realize that Dream had been lying to him the entire time.

Dream leaned against the wall across from Wilbur, crossing his arms in an attempt to push down his frustration.

“Wilbur?”

Wilbur looked up in surprise, clearly not paying any attention to his surroundings.

“Yes?”

Dream took a few steps toward Wilbur. “What you got there?”

Wilbur scowled and crushed the newspaper in his hands before tossing it across the room. “Nothing,” he said, “It doesn’t matter.”

Dream hummed slightly, staring down at the newspaper ball hatefully. “Been reading the news?”

“Does it matter?”

“Well, I’d hate to see you fill your head with lies.”

Wilbur rolled his eyes. “I’m not stupid,” he said as he pushed himself off of the wall and walking across the room, “I just wanted to see what Schlatt was up to.”

Dream couldn’t believe him. Wilbur wanted to see what Schlatt was up to, and he didn’t just ask Dream, the one he had been trusting with the information before?

“You couldn’t have just asked me? I have my sources, you know.”

Wilbur’s expression became more agonized. “I know, I know!” he shouted, “I just... it’s so *hard*, sometimes, to make out all these thoughts in my head, and I don’t know who to trust, and everything is this dissonant symphony full of strings out of tune, and I just needed to *get rid of it*.”

Dream almost felt bad for Wilbur and the emotional turmoil he was clearly going through. Wilbur deserved it, of course, he was one of the ones who destabilized Dream’s power in the first place, but still. It was sad to see a once so powerful and prideful man reduced to *this*.

“We’re going to find him, Wilbur,” Dream said, hoping he was sounding somewhat comforting, “And then you can focus back on razing Manberg to the ground.”

Wilbur seemed to relax slightly at that. “Yeah?”

Dream nodded. “I’m sure of it.”

It was true. Dream would leave no mercy for anyone who remained in Manberg.

Wilbur sighed. “I just... I miss him. It’s all so cold, Dream.”

Dream took another step toward Wilbur and put a hand on his shoulder. “We’ll save him,” Dream said, “You’re a smart man.”

Wilbur seemed to calm down even more at that, and Dream was relieved that he was at least *somewhat* salvaging this situation. At the very least, Wilbur wasn’t commenting on anything the paper might’ve called Dream out for.

“You’re right,” Wilbur said. His voice became suddenly harsher. “I am.”

And before Dream could figure out what Wilbur meant by that, there was a sword in his stomach, and then Wilbur yanked it back out again.

Agonizing pain all but blinded Dream, and it was all he could do to gasp and bring his hands to his injury, his hands already getting wet with blood.

He hadn’t expected this. *He hadn’t expected this*.

Wilbur angrily shouted and pinned Dream to the ground, causing Dream’s head to clash painfully with the floor.

The world was spinning.

Through blurry vision, Dream could see Wilbur was smiling at him.

“Dream, Dream, Dream,” he said, laughing, “You’ve screwed up this time.”

Dream needed to stay calm. There wasn’t much Wilbur could do to hurt him now anyway. Dream was probably going to lose his second life in a few moments.

“And how is that?” Dream asked, smiling.

Wilbur chuckled. “You think you can escape this Dream?” he asked, “You think you can get away scot-free with *my* little brother?”

Wilbur used a splash potion. Wilbur used a splash potion and all of the pain went away.

It also meant that Dream wasn’t going to be able to die to get out of this situation.

Wilbur was now moving his sword to Dream’s neck, clearly in a way that was supposed to make Dream afraid.

And maybe he was.

“One wrong move,” Wilbur whispered, “And I’ll kill you where you lie.”

“Oh yeah?” Dream asked, refusing to show weakness, even now, “And if I don’t tell you what you want?”

“Oh Dream,” Wilbur said, smiling, “There are far worse things than death. I mean, wasn’t it your marvelous idea to remove Technoblade’s fingers?”

No. *No way*. Dream was not losing his fingers to Wilbur of all people.

“What are you doing?” he demanded, trying to struggle out of Wilbur’s grip, “Are you crazy?”

“Maybe I am, Dream,” Wilbur said. He grabbed Dream’s wrist tightly, and Dream held his breath as Wilbur broke his wrist, tears of pain rising to his eyes. “Maybe I’m as crazy as everyone says I am. After all, I trusted *you*. ”

Wilbur violently brought Dream’s broken wrist down to the ground, and Dream couldn’t stop the pained whine from escaping.

This was mortifying.

“Besides, Dream,” Wilbur said, “I’m the villain, remember? I don’t have to play by the rules.”

Wilbur placed his sword on Dream’s neck, making it impossible for him to escape. Then, he pulled out his knife and hovered it over Dream’s fingers.

Dream forced his breathing to stay steady.

He wasn't sure how well he was doing.

"I will not hesitate," Wilbur said, "So start talking. What's Logstedshire?"

Dream snorted. He wasn't going to give up all of his secrets that easily. "I told you, I don't have any idea—"

Wilbur brought the knife all the way down.

Dream felt as though his lungs were trying to escape his chest as he screamed at the unbearable agony, tears actually beginning to run down his cheeks.

How had Technoblade's scream managed to sound so much more dignified when Dream took his arm?

"You have nine more of these, Dream," Wilbur said, "And I can always take larger limbs—"

No. Dream couldn't do that again.

"No, no wait!" Dream cried, hating himself for how pathetic he was acting, "Wait!"

"Then tell me." Wilbur's voice was set in a growl. "It's not that hard, really. Just tell me, what is Logstedshire?"

"It's not a what," Dream gasped, hastening to explain, "It's a place."

"Oh yeah? Where?"

Why did Wilbur care?

"Why does it—" Wilbur slowly began cutting into one of Dream's fingers. "OKAY, OKAY! It was this beach, okay? Far away!"

Wilbur lessened the pressure on the knife, and Dream gasped for air. "What does it have to do with Tommy?"

"It was where he was exiled," he said desperately, "The second time."

Wilbur cut off another finger. "Tommy hasn't *been* exiled a second—"

"YES, YES, HE HAS!" Dream screamed, barely able to think past the agony. "I'm from the future!"

"Are you kidding me?"

Dream was not kidding. Not this time.

"No," Dream began rambling, "No, no, I'm from the future, and so is Tommy, and Tubbo, I think Technoblade, and probably Schlatt, because he's really changed suddenly and the way he—"

“God, don’t you shut up?”

Dream did *not* want to be on the receiving end of that knife again. He shut his mouth.

“Tell me something then, *Dream*, ” Wilbur whispered, and Dream flinched, “If you’re telling the truth, which I quite frankly doubt, I have only two questions for you.”

Dream sucked in a breath as Wilbur held the knife over Dream’s fingers.

“Why was Tommy exiled?” Wilbur whispered, “And why is he so *different*?”

Dream was in agony, but even then, he could appreciate the hilarity that was Wilbur. He was seriously blaming Dream, *Dream* for doing the exact same things that Wilbur did to Tommy. It was actually hilarious.

“But I thought you liked the change in Tommy. Isn’t he so much more fun when submissive?”

The shocked expression on Wilbur’s face made it almost worth it.

“He’s not... what does that even mean?”

Dream started laughing, his pain bleeding into the mirthful sound. This was just too funny.

“I mean what I said! I made him something better after *Tubbo* exiled him! I—”

“Wait,” Wilbur interrupted, “What do you mean *Tubbo* exiled him?”

Good. Now, if Wilbur went to Manberg, he’d blame Tubbo for the crimes of the future. They could start fighting among themselves more and more.

And if they were so busy fighting each other, how could they possibly hope to stop Dream?

“He exiled Tommy. After Schlatt died, he took over L’manberg and exiled Tommy almost instantly.”

Wilbur made a snarling sound, which was exactly what Dream had been hoping for.

“Dream,” Wilbur said, his voice still sounding terrifying, “What do you mean, *you* made him something better?”

Dream laughed again. “I didn’t do anything you hadn’t already done to him.”

Wilbur brought the knife back onto one of Dream’s fingers, cutting into it. it got much harder to breathe.

“What the hell did you do?”

“I showed him his place! I made him better! I—”

“Where’s Tommy?” Wilbur growled.

And then a terrible, *brilliant* idea popped into Dream's head.

"He's dead."

"No," Wilbur whispered, "You're lying, you're lying, I heard him, he's not dead, I heard him, I *heard him*—"

"He killed himself," Dream continued, beginning to laugh.

This was *brilliant*. Wilbur would hopefully believe him, causing him not to look for Tommy. Even if Wilbur *did* look for Tommy, Dream had already sealed up enough walls after Tommy managed to get into Philza's cell.

Dream might lose Wilbur and even Phil, but at least he could manage to hold onto the one who was the center of it all.

"He choked himself on his own chains after he realized you weren't coming to save him, after he—"

Wilbur screamed, and he brought the knife into Dream's chest.

Finally.

When Dream woke up, he found himself alone.

After the first time Dream died, he knew that it was quite possible that he would get killed again, and the last thing Dream needed was for anyone to stand near his bed and kill him in his sleep.

So, Dream created a secret room and slept there, just so that he had time to recuperate after his second death.

His second death.

Now Dream was on his last life. One more death and that was it.

Dream chuckled lightly to himself, pulling out armor from the wooden chest he had in his room and grabbing a sword.

Time to see if anyone was out to kill him.

As it turned out, many people were out to kill him.

Dream made short work of him, although he could see Punz shooting arrows from the shadows, using an invisibility potion.

Dream knew that Punz would be a good investment.

After the slaughter, Dream had a very pleasant conversation with Schlatt.

Well, it was already a very eventful day, and Dream still hadn't met up with George yet.

"Thanks for your help," Dream told Punz, actually feeling genuine. Dream honestly wasn't sure how well he wouldn't been able to hold out without the mercenaries help. It was much harder to use a sword when he was missing two of his fingers.

There were still phantom pains where his fingers once were. Dream tried not to think about it.

"It's all in the job," Punz said, "You'd better pay me well for this."

Dream nodded. "Don't worry," he assured him, "I will."

"Good." Punz closed his eyes. "I hope Schlatt's speech just kills them all, and then you won't need me anymore, and I can have my money."

Dream frowned. "Speech?"

Punz gave Dream a bewildered look. "Yeah?" he said, "The one Schlatt's giving around noon?"

Noon... that was when George wanted to speak to Dream.

Oh. It became all so clear now.

George wanted to stall Dream so that he couldn't interfere with the speech. George was a *distraction*.

It was actually pretty smart.

It was a shame that Dream was smarter.

He found the remains of his inventory in the room where Wilbur killed him, and he picked up the button connected to Philza's bomb from the pile.

Philza was likely going to be at Schlatt's speech. Whether he be in the crowd or on the stage, he was going to be there.

And if there was an explosion during a major speech, who knew what sort of chaos would unfold?

Chaos led to fear. Fear led to mistrust. Mistrust led to the people seeking out new leadership. And when the time was right, Dream would swoop in, and everything would be his again.

It was perfect.

And it worked perfectly too.

"Why?" George asked, staring up at Dream in horror.

Dream stared at George, someone who used to be his friend, someone Dream wished had stayed by his side.

But he had no one to blame but himself for the loss.

For some reason, the thought made Dream laugh.

“I need control,” Dream said simply.

George somehow looked more heartbroken. “Why?!”

Why? *Why?*

“Look at this, George!” Dream shouted, waving his hands toward the bodies of the people Dream had just had killed, “See what happens when people defy me? I was keeping everyone safe!”

He only wanted to be the protector that the gods refused to be. That’s all he *ever* wanted to be.

“And this is safe?” George began coughing as he gestured to the bodies as well. “Dream, you’ve hurt people!”

Dream may have hurt people, but it was only those who were disrupting Dream’s plans. They should’ve known better. They should’ve known that Dream was only trying to make things better for everyone.

He dodged an arrow that a still conscious scout aimed at him. It was a pretty pathetic shot.

“I do what I have to do to show people the consequences of trying to fight me.”

“By what?” George demanded, “Going against the very thing you use to stand for?”

Dream wasn’t going against what he stood for. If anyone was fighting against Dream, there couldn’t be safety.

Dream was just doing what he had to do.

Things were going exactly to plan. Schlatt had apparently gotten arrested, Quackity was now in charge of a nation, and Phil was also incarcerated, leaving a very angry Technoblade behind.

Dream was winning.

After basking in that victory, Dream came back for Tommy, something he probably should’ve done much sooner.

Tommy looked so sad and pathetic chained to the bedside table, his eyes far more sunken than they were before, and his frame much thinner and sickly.

Maybe Dream should’ve fed him at least once.

“Dream?” Tommy asked, his voice hoarse and desperate.

Tommy had learned his lesson, and Dream undid his chains. When he ruffled his hair, he couldn’t help but to be reminded of when he ruffled Drista’s hair all those years ago.

But Tommy wasn’t Drista, and Dream knew that more than anyone.

Still, he finally got the kid something to eat, and Dream trusted that he had a much better hold on Tommy than he ever did on Wilbur.

That night, Dream allowed himself to sleep with the confidence that things were finally going right.

Dream was running through the maze.

This maze wasn’t like the underground caverns he died twice in. This maze was above ground, with towering trees on both sides of Dream, blocking him in. Wind smacked his face, causing his hair to move violently in all directions. Behind him, he could hear George and Sapnap’s voices.

Dream loved manhunts.

It was only a matter of time before Dream reached the center of the maze, where a ladder led down to the stronghold. Soon, Dream would go to the End, defeat the Ender Dragon, and finally take his place as ruler of the SMP.

George and Sapnap couldn’t stop him now.

Holding fast to his sword, Dream skidded around the corner and saw the center of the maze just in view. George and Sapnap’s footsteps were getting louder and louder, but Dream only laughed, pulling an ender pearl out of his inventory and throwing it to the center.

A familiar rushing sensation ran through his body, and Dream landed next to the ladder. Not wasting a moment, Dream quickly jumped down into the hole, holding loosely onto the ladder as he slid down.

He reached the bottom of the ladder as arrows from above flew toward his head. Dream dodged out of the way, and the arrows hit the stone of the stronghold with a *shtick*.

High on adrenaline, Dream grinned all the wider and spun around toward the End Portal, not yet activated.

It didn’t take long for him to place down the eyes of ender, and he didn’t hesitate before diving into the End, just dodging another one of George’s arrows.

He landed in the End, ready to kill the Ender Dragon like past rulers before him.

Except... it was quiet. *Too* quiet. Dream couldn't hear or even see any endermen, much less the ender dragon herself.

What... what happened?

Dream ran toward the center of the ring of obsidian towers, trying to figure out what the heck had happened.

It didn't happen like this.

Dream was supposed to kill the dragon. Dream was supposed to come back victorious. George and Sapnap were supposed to be right behind him, trying to stop him from successfully killing the beast.

So, where the hell were they? Where was anyone?

"Surprised, huh?"

Dream spun around at the sound of his own voice, finding himself facing another version of himself. The mask was gone, and Dream could see the scars that he had earned over the course of the many wars he had participated in, including the Manberg Pogtopia war.

It was almost like staring in the mirror.

"What are you doing here?" Dream asked, careful not to betray any of his emotions.

He still had his mask protecting his expressions, but this Dream knew Dream better than most. Dream was going to have to check his voice and gestures more thoroughly than he might.

Fortunately, Dream was good at hiding.

The Dream standing in front of him shrugged. "The same thing you're doing here, I guess," he said, "I mean, it's your fault that I'm in this situation, so I suppose I should thank you for that."

There was a hint of sarcasm in his voice, which only made Dream laugh. "You are me. It's thanks to both of us that we're here."

The Dream standing in front of him tilted his head and hummed. "Is it?" The other Dream sighed, walking over to the bedrock structure, where the ender dragon egg was calmly sitting. "Remember this?"

Dream couldn't help but to snort at that. "Of course, I do," he said, "We're the same person, remember?"

"We used to be the same person," the other Dream said, frowning, "But I'm not sure we are the same person anymore."

"And what makes you say that?"

“Well, for one,” the other Dream said casually, “I’m not sure I agree with all of your methods.”

Dream narrowed his eyes at the other Dream, who was still wearing a strangely grim expression.

“How so?” he asked, “Don’t you realize that I’ve achieved *everything* these past few weeks?”

“I don’t realize actually,” the other Dream said with a scowl. He pulled a book out of his inventory and tossed it to Dream.

Dream recognized it. It was the same book that he had used to attempt time travel.

“You really screwed things up with that,” the other Dream said, “I mean, I don’t exactly know what you were attempting to do, but whatever it was, it clearly didn’t go according to plan.”

“Admittedly, there were some unexpected... drawbacks,” Dream said quietly, “But things are going pretty smoothly now.”

The other Dream snorted. “Okay, then,” he said, glancing at the dragon egg behind him, “Hey, remind me, what happened to that egg?”

Dream laughed. “You know what happened to it.”

“True,” the other Dream said, “You know, it’s now terrorizing the overworld.”

Well that was... not what Dream was expecting to hear.

“How so?”

“Remember that red egg from before?” the other Dream asked, “It was the dragon egg that escaped to the overworld. It got corrupted. So, congratulations to us.”

“I’ll deal with it later,” Dream said, not particularly caring what stupid things he might have done at seventeen, “What do you even want?”

The other Dream tilted his head. “I don’t know,” he said thoughtfully, “I just think you should listen to yourself.”

“And what do you have to say?”

“You’re not a god.” The other Dream laughed grimly. “Trust me, I learned that the hard way.”

When Dream woke up, he put the dream out of his head. He had other plans he needed to fulfill.

After all, it was only a couple more days before everything Dream planned might come to fruition.

Chapter End Notes

3/5 day bjar challenge complete.

I am... very tired. I wrote all of this in a day and this was not like serotonin filled mermaid au that i did last moth so i am simply exhausted.

This was probably bad. I'm sorry. Next chapter is part one of the finale. If we're lucky i'll be done with the finale by friday but probably not.

Still this five day bjar challenge has been made great progress in the fic. The end is legitimately in sight.

Thank you for reading, i hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments, i'm so tired, have mercy on the teenager. <3

Edit 7/11/21: Also, please note that I'm not the only one with the egg is an ender dragon egg idea, i've heard it from other people (discord user Trip-P being one of them) before, but i came up with the idea organically while writing and went 'oh it's the same idea as this person' as opposed to 'i'm gonna take this person's idea'. Anyway yeah <3

Ball Field Please Don't Explode

Chapter Summary

This is that part of the multi-part series finale where it's mostly just set up for the cool part of the series finale.

I have no idea if that made sense.

Basically, the end is both very near and decently far.

Chapter Notes

tw: referenced smoking, mild symptoms of withdrawal, suicidal thoughts, grief, possessive behavior, child abuse, guilt, referenced terrorism, poison, referenced torture, referenced kidnapping

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Did you think about your assignment?”

Wilbur crossed his arms. “No,” he said stoutly, coughing violently for a moment.

The hospital had started to take him off of smoking, and Wilbur was not appreciative of it. Damn his health, he just wanted to *die*.

Puffy hummed. “Surely you remember something that you used to enjoy out of life,” she said quietly.

There were many things Wilbur used to enjoy out of life. When he was a child, he enjoyed playing chess with Technoblade, reading tales of adventures untold, and strumming his guitar. When he got older, he drew away from those things.

Wilbur was pretty sure his guitar was still back at Pogtopia. It used to belong to Kristin.

The thought filled Wilbur with more self-loathing than he had expected.

“Tommy,” Wilbur repeated, not even sure if that was true anymore, “It was always Tommy.”

“Was there anything you used to do with Tommy? Any passions you shared?”

Wilbur wondered if Puffy's real job was attempting to rip Wilbur's heart out as she brought memories to the surface that Wilbur would much rather *forget*.

And for some reason, all of the words came tumbling out before Wilbur could stop them.

"We, uh, we used to go into the garden together," he whispered, "Him, Tubbo, and I, we'd spend hours out there, pulling weeds and watering the plants, and making jokes."

Puffy didn't say anything, not taking her eyes off of Wilbur, as though she had a rapt interest in what children did in their spare time.

Wilbur almost stopped then and there. Why should Puffy get to know the memories that Wilbur held close to his heart?

"But what's the point of fond memories," a voice that sounded a lot like Kristin whispered in his mind, *"if they die with us?"*

Wilbur wanted to die. Wilbur wanted to leave this world known as the villain.

But Tommy was more than that. Tommy was brighter than that.

And maybe, just maybe, sharing these memories would be enough for at least Tommy to be remembered as something wonderful, as something good, as something that shouldn't have been taken away from the world so soon.

So, Wilbur continued speaking.

"Every time it snowed," Wilbur whispered, his eyes burning with tears, "Tommy would want to go outside. He'd point to the piles of snow, tugging on my sleeve, and he'd look at me with these big blue eyes, and he'd say—he'd say, 'Wilby, I-I wanna build a snowman.'"

A tear slipped down his cheek, and Puffy managed a small smile. "He sounds like a wonderful boy."

"He was," Wilbur said, closing his eyes and taking a shuddering breath, "And he'd give the snowman the strangest names too, but if I tried to argue, he'd give me the most disappointed look, like a cross between a puppy-dog face and a disapproving parent, and I'd crumble."

Wilbur uncrossed his arms and clasped his hands together. "When he was ten," he continued quietly, "He'd bring all sorts of animals home. I remember him standing there once, holding a crow with a broken wing in his hands, begging me to let me keep it. I think—" Wilbur's chest burned. "—I think he missed Phil and Techno."

Wilbur didn't want to think about them, though. This was about Tommy not Philza and Technoblade, and Wilbur was going to be damned if he didn't say everything he couldn't think of for Tommy.

"When he was sick, he'd cling onto me like a magnet. I remember once, I was trying to feed him soup, but instead he wouldn't stop hugging me. It took—it took a lot of convincing to get him to let go."

Wilbur smiled despite the tears that were now marring his face. “And one night, after he had a nightmare, he heard me playing guitar, and he opened the door so quietly, like he thought he shouldn’t be in there, and he looked at me like I had just played him the sun and the moon and the stars.”

Tommy had been five at the time, adorable when he peeked his head out from behind the door.

“I tried to teach him how to play,” Wilbur whispered, “But he ended up crying because he couldn’t place his small fingers down on the strings properly, so I made the chords while Tommy strummed the instrument, and he laughed like it was the most marvelous thing in the world.”

Wilbur shuddered. “And I just wish—I just wish I could hear him *laugh* again.” His voice cracked. “I want to—to take him up in my arms and hold him close and promise him that nobody could ever hurt him again.” Wilbur rubbed some of the tears out of his eyes. “But he’s dead,” Wilbur whispered with a smile, “He’s gone, and so why shouldn’t I want to be gone too?”

“You can live for him,” Puffy said gently, “You can honor his legacy.”

Wilbur laughed. “Maybe I don’t care about that,” he said.

Maybe he did.

Tubbo stared down at his communicator, petting Clementine, who was settled in his lap.

Dream: Here are the coordinates. You have four hours. Don’t forget our deal. (:

Today was the day. Today was the day they might finally get Tommy back.

Still, that last sentence haunted Tubbo, and he gripped onto Clementine’s fur tightly, not even thinking about how he might be hurting the dog.

Don’t forget our deal.

The deal was for Tubbo to sacrifice himself. That was the deal. Tubbo would become a slave of sorts to Dream, and Tommy would be free.

Obviously, they were going against the deal. Technoblade said that it shouldn’t be too hard for them to defeat Dream if they all worked together, commenting on how the man “only likes to pretend he’s stronger than anyone else. His god-complex gives me a headache sometimes.”

Tubbo resisted the urge to mutter, “Sounds like someone else I know.”

Ticking off Technoblade this close to the grand finale would not be what one would call a wise choice.

Tubbo heard a knock on his door, and he forced himself to stand up, Clementine sliding off of his lap and following Tubbo loyally.

Tubbo missed seeing her by Tommy's side.

Tubbo opened the door, and he was unsurprised to see Technoblade standing over him, his arms crossed.

"Have you gotten it yet?" he asked, clearly as anxious as Tubbo was to get Tommy back from whatever Dream was doing to him.

"Just now, actually," Tubbo said, "how'd you know?"

Technoblade shrugged. "I didn't," he said, "Chat—I just got impatient of being impatient, so I guess it was good timing."

Oh right, Technoblade's voices. Clearly, Technoblade hadn't realized that Tubbo knew about them now.

"I know about the voices, you know," Tubbo said lightly, "you don't have to keep them a secret."

Technoblade's eyes widened. "What?" He asked, his voice a little sharper now.

Tubbo took a deep breath. "I know about the voices," he said again, "You told us about them, in the future."

Technoblade frowned, looking more annoyed than anything else. "I did that?" he demanded.

Tubbo nodded. "Yep," he said, popping the 'p', "You were warning us that if we didn't leave you alone, you were going to give into them and slaughter us all."

Technoblade groaned. "Of course, I would," he said, "I spend all this time trying to keep these chaos demons a secret, and then I decide to reveal it in a fit of annoyance like an old man trying telling you to get off his lawn. Of course."

"I think Tommy knows as well," Tubbo added, "And probably Schlatt."

Technoblade narrowed his eyes at Tubbo. "Did you tell anyone else?"

Tubbo frowned, trying to remember if he ever mentioned it before. "I don't *think* so?" he said, knowing that was probably not the most reassuring way he could phrase that answer, "I don't recall that I have."

Technoblade stared at Tubbo for a few moments, and Tubbo hoped that he hadn't just ruined everything when they needed Technoblade most.

"Oh well," Technoblade sighed, and Tubbo let out a small breath of relief with him, "I told Sam without realizing a few days ago anyway, so that's fine."

Tubbo's chest squeezed at the mention of Sam. He had assured them all that the small bomb he had given Dream was defective, and it couldn't do any harm at all, but he still worried. What if Dream managed to make it functional anyway? What if Sam had been lying to them? What if Tommy exploded like Phil, except this time he didn't have a totem of undying? This time, Tubbo only had one life. This time—

“Okay, you look like you're thinking way too hard,” Technoblade said, “Everything's fine, alright?”

Tubbo clenched his fists, staring at the small braid in Technoblade's hair. “I just... I don't want anything to go wrong.”

“And neither do I,” Technoblade agreed, “But remember, you have the Blade on your side. With me, you're practically invincible.”

Tubbo managed a weak chuckle. “Yeah...”

Technoblade sighed. “I'm not very good at this sort of thing,” he admitted, “Do you need someone else for this?”

Tubbo wasn't sure. Obviously, he had to tell the others that Dream had given him the coordinates, and that they only had four more hours before it all went down. There was no real purpose in hiding in his room while Technoblade got him Quackity or Fundy for moral support.

“No, it's fine,” Tubbo sighed, “Let's just go tell Quackity that it's go time.”

Technoblade nodded. “Makes sense,” he agreed, “Alright, let's go.”

Tubbo followed Technoblade down the hallway, and it occurred to him that this was only his second, maybe third, time that he had spent alone with Technoblade.

It was funny to think that a few weeks ago, Tubbo had wanted nothing more than to kill him.

“Technoblade,” Tubbo said slowly, “I have a question.”

Technoblade paused his walk down the hall, glancing back to behind Tubbo. “Yeah?”

“I was wondering.” Tubbo wondered how he could phrase his question without making Technoblade angry, and then decided to throw caution to the winds. “When all this is said and done, you aren't going to try to destroy Manberg's government, will you?”

Technoblade raised his eyebrows, looking almost *surprised*, before understanding dawned on his features. He turned back around and continued walking. “Nah,” he said, “That feels like a waste of time.”

Tubbo frowned, jogging to catch up to Technoblade's long strides. “But... isn't that your whole thing? Aren't you an anarchist?”

“Being an anarchist isn't actually all about mass destruction,” Technoblade said dryly.

“You could’ve fooled me.”

“Yeah, well, maybe I’ve learned a thing or two,” Technoblade admitted, “I mean, hurting people for your own cause doesn’t change the fact you’re still hurting people.”

It was true, of course, but to hear those words from Technoblade, the same man who stared Tommy down and told him to die like a hero, well, it was a bit strange.

They stood outside the door, and Tubbo stopped, clearing his throat. “Thanks,” he finally said.

Technoblade raised his eyebrows. “For what?”

It was with a grim smile that Tubbo said, “For not killing me.”

And that was all that there was really left to say.

Tubbo entered the office, where Quackity was doing nothing in particular, just fidgeting with a pen.

“Tubbo!” he exclaimed upon Tubbo’s entrance, “Did you get the coordinates?”

Tubbo nodded, handing the communicator to Quackity for him to see.

Quackity put the coordinates into his own communicator before handing Tubbo’s communicator back to Tubbo.

“Okay,” Quackity said, “We’ve been over the plan enough for me not to hold your hands each step of the way, yeah?”

Tubbo and Technoblade nodded. Tubbo had the plan so plainly memorized that he could probably recite it in his sleep.

“Great!” Quackity clapped his hands together, grinning. He lowered his tone, glancing around, as though Dream could be hiding in the walls. “I’m going to go ahead and dig up that TNT Dream has inevitably placed under the ground.”

They didn’t actually know for certain, but it would be stupid if they decided to fall for the same trick twice.

“Have fun,” Tubbo said cheerfully.

“I will.” Quackity winked. “I got plenty of practice from that time we both dug up Wilbur’s TNT, remember that?”

Tubbo remembered how sore his arms felt afterward, but it had been immensely satisfying to know that they were at least not about to get a repeat of November sixteenth. “How could I forget?”

“Stop wasting time and get moving,” Technoblade interrupted, “And don’t get seen.”

Quackity rolled his eyes. "I'm not an idiot, Technoblade."

Technoblade shrugged, looking entirely unapologetic. "You can never know these days."

Retirement suited Schlatt.

He was still drinking copious amounts of coffee to cope with all the crap that was going on, but at least things weren't getting worse like they usually did. As a matter of fact, it was nice to have no responsibilities and just relax in the quietness of his new household.

His ankle monitor was a bit of a hassle to get used to, but Schlatt knew it was a small price to pay for his crimes. Poor Phil was sitting in prison for crimes he didn't even commit.

And, of course, his mailbox was anything but relaxing, considering that he had many letters sending him hate and death threats.

And while Schlatt couldn't exactly blame his citizens for thinking he was scum, he still took great pleasure in throwing those letters into his fireplace nonetheless.

Schlatt had faced the consequences for his actions. He had come clean. He was working to be a better person. Spiraling into a cycle of self-loathing wasn't going to do anyone good, much less the people he was trying to make everything up to.

He hadn't forgiven himself, and he wasn't sure if he would ever come to fully forgive himself.

But Schlatt did know that, if nothing else, he could continue moving forward, making amends in everything he did.

Maybe that sounded cheesy. Maybe Schlatt was completely wrong. But if Quackity, Fundy, and *Tubbo* were willing to give Schlatt the chance to try again at life, then maybe Schlatt should listen to them.

But that wasn't really on the forefront of Schlatt's mind right now. Today was the day that they were finally going to put their plan to fruition, and Schlatt would be damned if he wasn't there to help put Dream in his place.

Sure enough, it didn't take long for Schlatt to hear a knock on his door, and he quickly crossed the room to answer.

"Hello," Technoblade said, "May I come in?"

Schlatt nodded, opening the door wider so that Technoblade could step inside. He then carefully shut the door behind him.

"Nice arm," Schlatt said, noticing that Technoblade had finally gotten a prosthetic.

"Thank you," Technoblade said pleasantly, "I think it's pretty cool, if I do say so myself."

Schlatt nodded, and it occurred to him that if any bystanders had seen Technoblade politely knock on Schlatt's door, they would probably be having a fit of confusion. Technoblade was pretty notorious for his 'hating government' stance on life.

"People are going to think you've come in here to assassinate me," Schlatt said.

"Good for them," Technoblade replied, "It'll be good for my reputation."

Schlatt frowned. "Except that when they see me alive and well, they'll think I'm working with you."

"Which, *technically*, you are," Technoblade agreed, squatting down with the key to the ankle moniker, "It's not that big of a deal, really. I'm just here to break you out of your lawful house arrest, so you can help us beat up the man who has my little brother hostage."

Technoblade took the ankle monitor off of Schlatt's ankle, and Schlatt would be lying if he didn't say that it didn't feel *good* to finally have his ankle free of that weight.

"I can't decide if you're painting us in a good light or a bad light with that statement," Schlatt said dryly.

Technoblade sighed, pocketing the key. "Let's call it mixed feelings," he said, pulling an invisibility potion out of his inventory, "Come on, we don't exactly have time to waste talking about how much I don't like you."

Technoblade handed Schlatt the potion, and Schlatt downed it quickly.

Now to hope everything would go according to plan. Knowing Schlatt's luck, he had just jinxed it with that sentence.

Schlatt knocked on the wooden walls as they exited the building. Better safe than sorry if he did say so himself.

Prison could've been much worse.

It wasn't the most pleasant place Phil had lived in, but he had experienced much worse. At the very least, he wasn't being kept in a cold and dark room with his hands tied up in ropes as he watched one of his sons get dragged away by Dream and the other manipulated to think he was imagining things.

All in all, this was a major improvement, complete with proper lighting, food, and other people to speak to.

Still, Phil was glad when Fundy came to pick him up.

"Today's the day," Fundy had said after the prison guards had escorted Phil to him, "We're going to get Tommy back."

“We’re going to kill Dream,” Phil corrected, still refusing to get his hopes up about Tommy.

Fundy’s expression dimmed, but he didn’t argue, only nodding. “Um, right,” he said, somewhat awkwardly, “Anyway, I’m gonna discreetly take you out of this lovely establishment, so if you would just drink this.”

Fundy gave Phil an invisibility potion, and Phil couldn’t help but to be grimly reminded of the unfortunate drawbacks of the effects only lasting for a certain number of minutes. In a different life, Phil might not have been captured by Dream at all.

“Alright, mate,” he said, “Thanks for picking me up. I appreciate it.”

Fundy blushed. “It was nothing.”

“Still,” Phil said simply, popping the cork of the potion and drinking it, “I appreciate it all the same.”

Phil pretended not to notice when Fundy straightened slightly, sputtering and smiling at the praise.

Tommy really wished that Punz had found a faster acting potion because Dream had not been showing any signs of change at all the day before, and Tommy had been forced to suffer the same mental gymnastics that he suffered every time he *saw* Dream.

Dream’s his friend. Dream’s lying to him. Dream’s keeping him safe. Dream only wants Tommy to feel weak.

Suffice it to say, it was exhausting, and Tommy was just glad that Dream was feeding him properly, even if he was also being beaten to the ground under the guise of training.

Still, maybe it was Tommy’s fault for being so weak in the first place. If Tommy could take care of himself like everyone else, he wouldn’t have been trapped with Dream for so long. He wouldn’t have been trapped with Wilbur for so long. Maybe, if Tommy had managed to show some initiative, nobody would have gotten hurt.

Maybe Dream really was just trying to make him better.

Tommy scowled up at the ceiling of his tiny room. If Dream was trying to make him better, it was the least he could do to not *drug* him before training sessions.

Dream said there wasn't drugs.

There were. Tommy knew there were. There was no way that Tommy was actually that pathetic without being under the influence of some weakness potion.

But he was weak.

“Shut up,” Tommy said through gritted teeth, “I’m not listening to you.”

The small voice in his head quieted slightly, although Tommy was sure it would be back full force when Dream decided to pay him a visit. Maybe, if Tommy was lucky Dream would only open the door before passing out, whatever poison Punz gave him finally kicking in.

If Tommy was unlucky, Dream was going to pull him back into his mind games, and it would take every ounce of Tommy's brainpower to keep repeating the mantra inside his head:

Dream wasn't his friend. Dream didn't care about him. Dream was just using him. Dream wasn't his friend. Dream didn't care about him. Dream was just using him.

As if Tommy's thoughts summoned the man, the door swung open, revealing Dream himself.

"Today's a big day, Tommy!" Dream said, sounding extraordinarily cheerful for someone who had been potentially poisoned.

If Punz had lied to Tommy, Tommy was going to kill him himself.

"Yeah?" Tommy asked, trying to sound like he wasn't having a crisis over how healthy Dream was acting.

"I'm finally going to take you outside," Dream said, "You've been so good lately, and I want to reward that behavior."

Like the little traitor it was, Tommy's chest bloomed with warmth at the praise. He had finally made Dream happy. He had finally shown progress—

No.

Dream wasn't his friend. Dream didn't care about him. Dream was just using him.

Still, Tommy hated knowing that the smile that spread across his face was almost completely genuine.

And, admittedly, the knowledge of being outside for the first time in days was pretty great.

"Really?" he asked, hardly daring to believe that Dream would indulge him that much.

Dream hummed and nodded. "Now, come on," he said, "I want to get in some training before we do that."

Tommy obediently followed Dream out of the bedroom, and he finally noticed something *strange* about the way Dream was walking. It wasn't super obvious, and he definitely didn't look like Wilbur when he was drunk. He was just... swaying ever so slightly when he moved.

It was probably Tommy's imagination. His desperation for Dream to show any sign of poisoning was probably just making Tommy see random symptoms out of nowhere.

Still, a small amount of hope spread through his body like a drug. Not only was Dream possibly poisoned, but Dream was also taking him *outside*.

And if that wasn't the best recipe for an escape attempt that Tommy had heard in days, then Tommy truly was a passive fool.

Chapter End Notes

Alright, this fic officially has a estimate for the number of chapters left!

4/5 five day bjar challenge complete.

And big things are coming in the next chapter.

Very big things.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

Third Strike

Chapter Summary

Tommy does a thing.

Chapter Notes

tw: character death, dissociation, hostage situations, blood, injury, child abuse, poisoning, coughing and other such symptoms of poisoning, ptsd, self-loathing, crying, referenced human bombs, threats

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After breakfast and training, Tommy realized that there was *definitely* something off with Dream.

It was still subtle, but Tommy could see it in the way Dream seemed to have a harder time fighting Tommy during training. He could see it in the way Dream actually had to pause to cough. Tommy could see it in the way Dream stepped to the side, drinking a potion that was probably intended to fix the issue.

It was futile, though. Both Dream and Tommy knew that potions only helped with physical injuries, not being sick. And milk only got rid of any potion effects.

Tommy tried to keep the smile off of his face, but Dream noticed it anyway, and he dug harder into their training.

By the time it was done, Tommy could barely stand, and Dream was heaving for breath.

A small part of Tommy felt worried for Dream. Should he help his friend? He looked like he was in pain—

No. Dream wasn't his friend. This was just part of Tommy's plan. Dream would fall over while they were outside, and Tommy would just run away, easy as that.

Tommy tried not to cringe as Dream rested his hand on Tommy's shoulder and handed him a potion. Tommy drank it eagerly, and he relaxed at the pain being seeped away by the warmth that spread into his injuries.

At least Dream was kind enough to help him recover from such brutal training.

Prime, Tommy hated his stupidly easy-to-manipulate brain sometimes.

“Alright,” Dream said, his voice somehow sounding *normal* despite the fact that he was very clearly suffering from symptoms of poisoning. “I think It’s time to go outside.”

Hope flooded Tommy’s chest as Dream pulled something out of his inventory.

His hope immediately shattered when he saw what Dream was holding in his hands.

Chains.

Tommy stuffed his hands into his pockets instinctually, as though he were trying to hide his wrists from the disgusting contraptions.

“Dream—” Tommy began, hoping that there might be some way to convince him to *not* put those shackles around his wrists, *please*, everything was too confining as it was.

“I want to trust you, Toms,” Dream said, ruffling Tommy’s hair, “but you haven’t earned it yet. If you’re good this time, maybe I’ll let you outside without chains the next time.”

Tommy hated how it made sense. Tommy hated how Dream still suspected him of trying to escape, which would be *true* but still.

Tommy hated how he leaned into Dream’s touch, even though he knew everything about it was wrong.

Tommy hated being a pathetic child.

“Okay,” Tommy said, because what else could he say? Unless he wanted Dream to only suspect *more*, Tommy was just going to put up with those stupid chains with their stupid heavy metal and the way that they made Tommy feel so *trapped*.

Besides, the plan could still go on. Dream would still collapse, and Tommy could just run away with the chains. It would be annoying, but it’s not impossible.

As Tommy moved to take his hands out of his pockets, his fingers brushed against a small, familiar, cold object.

The paperclip.

He quickly brought it into his fist. Maybe, if anything went south, he could unlock the chains and run away from the already weakened Dream. Punz probably wouldn’t stop him, assuming that Punz was going with them. Tommy had given Punz way too many valuables for him to try to take him back to Dream’s clutches.

Then again, Punz had complete access to Techno’s vault now. There wasn’t really anything to stop him from continuing working for Dream while he pillaged the valuables in there.

In Tommy’s defense, he was just trying to work with what he had at the time. Hopefully, Technoblade wouldn’t be too angry when he found out.

Technoblade was pretty ticked.

*OOF. **TECHNOMAD. BURN THEM ALL.***

They had gone to Techno's very secret vault in the hopes of getting some good gear to fight against Dream with, and instead, he found the place had been *raided*.

Whoever found out about his base and broke in, Technoblade was going to give them a very long and painful death.

*Yesssss. **OKAY BUT WHO WOULD HAVE KNOWN? ANOTHER TIME TRAVELER?**
Tommy stole like the raccoon he is lol.*

"Alright," Technoblade sighed, "Everybody just... take whatever you can find."

Fortunately, Tubbo and Fundy had their own armor, and there were still three full sets, which was still about enough for everyone. Technoblade was also relieved to find that he still had plenty of invisibility potions, which were pretty instrumental to the entire plan working.

"Don't worry, mate," Phil reassured him, resting a hand on his shoulder as Technoblade watched everyone else pillage around, "We've got this."

*YEAH. **TECHNO SUPPORT.** We are all going to die and fall victim to the ashes of despair and self-loathing as we realize that we can protect and satisfy-**I BELIEVE IN YOU**
TECHNOBRAID.*

"Someone stole my stuff, Phil," Technoblade said, "If they know about this place, what's to say they don't know about everything else?"

"It's going to be fine," Phil promised.

It was going to be fine.

That's what Tubbo promised himself as he walked closer and closer to the coordinates. He wasn't wearing any armor, and he felt disgustingly exposed, suddenly aware of every brush of wind against his skin, every time a leaf crunched strangely, every bug that tried to fly into his face.

Dream wanted to come unarmed, unarmored, and alone.

And so Tubbo was coming. A bow and a set of arrows were sitting in his inventory. He wasn't wearing any armor. And he was anything *but* alone.

Still, his companions had *long* since started drinking their invisibility potions, and so although Tubbo could occasionally hear something that indicated that they were still near, Tubbo still felt horribly alone.

Did Tommy ever feel like this?

Probably.

Tubbo clenched his hands into fists. They were going to get him back. They *were*.

Tubbo was getting closer and closer to the coordinates, and he took some more deep breaths. They had a plan. The chances of it failing were low.

Then again, knowing Dream, he could have a counter plan just to counter their own plan.

Funnily enough, that thought did not make Tubbo feel any better about his chances.

Finally, after what felt like hours of walking, the clearing finally came into view.

And in that clearing stood Dream with two companions standing by his side.

Tubbo felt relief flood him, making him almost giddy.

Tommy was here. Tommy was *here*. Tubbo was right. Tommy was alive, and he was here, and they could save him.

A little way off, Tubbo could hear a gasp. It was probably from Philza.

Tubbo himself felt his heart beat faster and faster with every step he took closer to Tommy. He was *right there*.

And he looked dreadful.

Tommy's once at least somewhat full skin was now completely sunk in, as though he had gone days without eating. His skin was pale, and there were dark eyebags surrounding his eyes. As a matter of fact, the only thing that seemed to be in decent condition about Tommy was the blueness in his eyes.

Tubbo remembered how gray they had seemed when he tried to free Tommy from Pogtopia.

Tubbo recognized the other person standing slightly farther off from Dream as Punz. The others would make quick work of him.

Right now, Tubbo just needed to focus on Dream.

"Hello, Tubbo," Dream said smoothly, although there was something somewhat strange about his voice, "I'm glad to see you are following the conditions of our agreement."

At those words, Tommy snapped his head up to Dream, his eyes wide. "What?" he whispered, his voice cracking, "Agreement? Dream, what are you—"

"*Quiet*, Tommy," Dream said sharply, pulling out a crossbow, "Unless you want me to hurt your friend?"

Tommy shut up, shaking his head and looking more afraid than Tubbo was used to seeing on Tommy's face, well, ever.

"I followed our end of the agreement," Tubbo said, raising his voice. He couldn't stand to see Tommy mistreated like this, and he wished with everything he had that he could kill Dream right this second. "I think it's time that you go through with yours."

Unfortunately, Tubbo didn't trust Dream not to use Tommy as a human shield, so Tubbo kept his hand still.

Out of his peripheral vision, Tubbo could see Punz turning, looking around like he saw something.

Dream coughed violently, and Tommy's face twitched at the action.

"Somehow, I don't trust you," Dream said, "Punz, do you see anyone?"

Punz rested his hand on his sword hilt. "I can hear—"

An arrow went straight into Punz's forehead, and the man toppled backward, dead.

Tubbo and Tommy sucked in a breath, the surprise too much for the both of them, Tubbo supposed.

Dream swore, which only dissolved into more coughing. Was Dream... was Dream *sick*?

A grin started spreading over Tubbo's face. Was Dream just *conveniently* sick on the day that they were doing this exchange?

Maybe things actually *would* work out well.

"You brought friends," Dream said, disdain obvious in his tone as he held Tommy by the arm in what looked to be an iron grip.

"And so what if I did?" Tubbo countered.

"I distinctly recall one of the terms begin you coming *alone*," Dream said, venom in his voice as he swayed slightly to the side.

"And I distinctly recall the agreement being you hand over Tommy," Tubbo replied with equal venom, "But somehow, I doubt you were ever planning on doing that, were you?"

Dream laughed, dissolving into more coughs. "You can't—you can't stop me," he said, stomping on something.

Tubbo heard the click of a button, and his heart raced as he braced for explosions. Tommy hunched in on himself.

The silence was deafening.

Dream pressed the button with his foot again.

This time, it was followed by the sound of Quackity's laughter.

"Are you looking for something, Dream?" he asked, appearing from behind a few trees. His invisibility must've just run out, and he was holding TNT in his hands. "Did you lose something that belonged to you?"

Tubbo grinned, and Tommy gaped at Quackity, his face the very picture of shock.

"How—" Tommy began.

But Dream interrupted with his own hysterical laughter, which mixed with worse and worse coughing. "You really think that'd be the only card I'd play?" he asked, "You really think I'd only have one plan?"

Tommy was staring at his chains and away from Dream, his face scrunched up in an expression that meant he was concentrating on something.

Technoblade, Philza, Schlatt, and Fundy appeared, their own invisibility gone. All four of them were pointing crossbows at Dream's head.

"Don't think you're one step ahead, Dream," Technoblade said. He chuckled. "Believe me, you're not."

"Give me back my *son*." The threat in Philza's tone chilled all of Tubbo's bones, and he shivered. Tommy flinched, but he didn't take his eyes off of his chains.

Schlatt's grin was full of teeth. "You've lost."

They were here.

They were *all here*.

Tommy felt himself quake, and he wasn't sure if it was from fear, or excitement, or adrenaline. Dream's hand, which was squeezing painfully at his arm, was also trembling, and Tommy couldn't tell if that was an effect of the poison, or simply a byproduct of Dream's plans going so *wrong*.

Tommy didn't even realize that Dream's plans *could* go wrong like this. He hadn't thought it to be possible. Dream *always* won.

And now he was *losing*.

Tommy imagined the expression that was probably on Dream's face right now. Maybe terrified, maybe completely expressionless, maybe angry.

The last one made Tommy want to shiver, but he forced it down. It was hard enough to pick the lock to these chains without flinching and shivering and shuddering like he had been doing this entire time.

They had all come. They had all come to save *him* from Dream.

They did care after all.

Suddenly, Tommy's previous belief that nobody else cared about him seemed silly, ridiculous even. How could he so easily believe such an obvious lie?

Tommy's heart soared when he successfully turned the lock.

"Fine," Dream said lightly, still coughing in between words, "If you want him—you can—take him."

Dream let go of Tommy's arm, and Tommy forced the chains from his hands, grinning wildly as he properly freed himself. He looked up at Tubbo, who was smiling as well.

Oh, Tommy had *missed* Tubbo.

Their last argument seemed so stupid, so petty now, and Tommy wanted nothing more than to apologize as he started stumbling toward him.

Tommy barely made it two steps before Dream's hand snaked around his wrist again and *pulled*. A cry escaped Tommy's throat as he was slammed violently against Dream's chest.

Everyone still had their crossbows aimed at Dream's head, and now even Tubbo pulled out a bow and arrow.

"You shoot and he's dead," Dream said harshly, placing a knife against Tommy's throat, "I won't hesitate."

"What is wrong with you?!" Fundy demanded, "He's just a kid!"

"*He's just a kid*," Dream mocked, coughing and stumbling backward. The movement caused the knife to dig deeper into Tommy's skin, and he couldn't stop the smallest pained noise from escaping. "Don't make me laugh. He's a threat."

"Oh yeah?" Schlatt asked, "A threat to what?"

"What do you think?" Dream's laughter was getting more hysterical, and Tommy felt more and more unsafe as he began swaying more and more. If *this* was the time that Dream decided to collapse, Tommy was going to kill him. "A threat to my power, a threat to my attempts to keep everyone *safe*."

"And here's the god complex," Technoblade muttered.

Tommy snorted in spite of the fact that he was somewhat terrified out of his mind.

“I’m better than any gods!” Dream shouted, coughing more, “I do more than they’ll *ever* do.”

“Cool motive,” Schlatt said, “Still murder. Let go of Tommy, and maybe we’ll let you live.”

“Don’t make me laugh,” Dream snarled, his hand trembling. Tommy gasped as the knife cut into more of his skin. “You’ll kill me as soon as I let go of him.”

Tommy needed to get this knife away from his throat.

Slowly, Tommy began lifting his hands up toward the knife on his throat. Fortunately, Dream seemed too focused on the others to notice what Tommy was doing.

“If you don’t let go of my child this instant,” Phil threatened, “I will make your life a living hell.”

They were trapped. Unless Tommy could get this knife off of him, they were trapped in this endless stalemate. Dream couldn’t do anything out of fear of getting shot. Nobody could shoot him out of fear of getting Tommy killed.

“I put a bomb in his leg, you know,” Dream began rambling, “I tried to use it a few minutes ago.” He coughed, “I should’ve known Sam would give me a dud.”

Tommy’s heart skipped a beat, but he didn’t stop lifting his hands toward the knife. This was stupid. This was so incredibly stupid.

But Tommy was known for doing incredibly stupid things.

So, with trembling fingers and sweaty palms, Tommy tightly grabbed hold of Dream’s wrist and *pushed*.

The knife slipped from Dream’s fingers.

Dream let out a guttural scream and pinned Tommy to the ground. Whistling arrows soared over both of them.

Dream wrapped his trembling hands around Tommy’s throat; Tommy’s hand felt the hilt of the knife lying in the grass. He grabbed onto it tightly and panickedly sliced toward Dream.

The knife created a large gash in Dream’s neck.

Dream stilled and let out a shocked sound. Blood dribbled from his mouth. He slackened and collapsed on top of Tommy.

And then it was done.

After all that pain, after all that suffering, it was done.

It was done, just like that.

It was over.

Fundy stared.

Philza stared.

Quackity stared.

Schlatt stared.

Technoblade stared.

Dream was dead. Dream was dead because no matter how hard he tried to fight for control, no matter how tightly he clung to his power, he had really been digging the grave for himself the entire time.

After all, why would Tommy have killed him if Dream hadn't held the knife in the first place?

Tubbo didn't stare. Instead, he dashed toward his friend, still hidden underneath Dream's body.

"Tommy!"

Tommy didn't move when he heard Tubbo call his name.

As a matter of fact, he hadn't moved at all since Dream collapsed on top of him. Despite Dream's weight making it harder for him to breathe, despite Dream's blood that was surely soaking Tommy's clothes, and despite Tommy's other injuries, he wouldn't move. He wasn't even sure that he *could* move.

Dream was dead. He killed him.

Dream was his friend, and he killed him.

Dream was never his friend, but did that mean anything? Did that make up for the fact that Dream was now lifeless and on top of him, never to speak again, never to breathe again, never to do *anything* ever again.

Dream deserved it. *Did he?* It was self-defense. *Was it?*

Tommy's hands were shaking. He had never wanted to kill Dream. It wasn't supposed to end like this. It was never supposed to end like this.

Someone was heaving Dream off of him, and inexplicably, Tommy found himself tightly grabbing hold of Dream's wrist.

"—hear me?" Tubbo's voice filtered into Tommy's hearing, and he blinked.

He turned his head ever so slightly and saw Tubbo sitting next to him, wearing a frown.

“Tubbo?” Tommy whispered.

Someone tried to take Dream away again, and Tommy couldn’t stop the whine that escaped him as he refused to let go of Dream.

“Hey, big man,” Tubbo said, his voice sounding thick, “You with us again?”

Tommy frowned. He did feel more grounded in reality, although he wasn’t sure if that was a good thing. A part of him wanted to return to feeling out of touch from his sense, to return to the fog, to hide from everything—

Someone grabbed his wrist, the wrist on the same hand holding Dream, and Tommy sucked in a breath, jerking his attention back toward Tubbo.

“Yeah,” Tommy said, letting out a shaky breath, “I’m with you.”

Tubbo smiled. “Awesome,” he said. He hesitated. “Can you... can you let go?”

He should let go. Dream wasn’t his friend. Dream had never been his friend. Dream had hurt and manipulated and abused Tommy time and time again. Dream had wanted to kill him.

Tommy should let go.

Tommy swallowed.

He couldn’t.

“I’m sorry,” Tommy said quietly.

He wasn’t just sorry for being unable to let go of Dream. He was sorry for the things he said the day he tried to rescue Technoblade. He was sorry for being selfish. He was sorry for never being strong enough.

Tubbo’s smile didn’t fade, even though a small tear rolled down his cheek. “I’m sorry too.”

“Let’s call it even, yeah?” Tommy asked weakly.

“Sure, big man.”

Technoblade appeared into view next to Tubbo, and Tommy sucked in a breath.

Technoblade looked different from what Tommy remembered. His hair was shorter, only up to his shoulders, although there was a small braid behind his ear.

His arm was made up of netherite, and Dream’s words echoed in his ears.

Wilbur cut his arm off.

Tommy had no idea if that was true anymore.

“Tech?” Tommy whispered, “You’re alright?”

Technoblade nodded jerkily.

Tommy relaxed. “Oh, that’s good.”

“You need to let go, Toms,” Techno said, sounding very uncharacteristically choked up, “It’s over. He’s gone.”

Tommy squeezed his eyes shut, trying to stop the burning sensation of the tears. “I know,” he whispered, “I’m sorry.”

Tubbo moved his hold from Tommy’s wrist to Tommy’s hand, which Tommy was still using to clutch onto Dream.

Tommy opened his eyes, and Tubbo squeezed it gently.

“It’s okay,” Tubbo promised, “It wasn’t your fault.”

For some reason, those were the words that caused Tommy to relax his grip, and he let Tubbo pull his hand away from Dream.

The weight of Dream’s body left entirely, and Tommy noticed it was Philza taking Dream away.

“You all came,” Tommy said hollowly, not moving from his place on the ground.

“Of course, we did,” Tubbo said, “You’re our friend.”

And suddenly the weight in Tommy’s chest burst, and sobs ripped through his body. Tubbo’s face fell, but Tommy didn’t think before sitting up and *flinging* himself onto Tubbo, wrapping his arms around him so tightly it was a miracle Tubbo didn’t try to pull away.

But Tubbo didn’t flinch away, or cringe, or even force Tommy off of him.

He hugged Tommy *back*.

Tommy’s sobs became violent gasps, and he was only dimly aware of Tubbo also crying, burrowing his face into Tommy’s shoulder. Tommy buried his face into Tubbo’s hair. It smelled like honey.

“I’m sorry,” Tubbo sobbed, “I’m sorry for lying to you, I’m sorry for breaking your trust—”

“I shouldn’t have shouted,” Tommy was sobbing at the same time, “You’re my friend, and I acted so *selfishly*, you were right, I did my own stupid rescue mission—”

“Only because we lied first,” Tubbo interrupted, “We should’ve told you the whole truth, but we were so *stupid*.”

“I shouldn’t have compared you to Dream or Wilbur,” Tommy whispered.

“I deserved it,” Tubbo sniffed.

“No, you didn’t.”

Tommy wasn’t sure how long they stayed there in each other’s arms. He wanted to stay in that moment forever. He wanted to be able to pretend that everything would be okay.

Eventually, however, they separated, and Tommy glanced over to Technoblade, who was holding out a potion to Tommy. Tommy frowned at him quizzically, and Technoblade pointed to his own neck with his prosthetic arm.

Oh. Tommy had nearly forgotten about that.

He took the potion and quickly drank it, instantly feeling relief at his wounds closing up.

“Thanks,” he whispered.

“It was nothing,” Technoblade said, “It’s just... it’s good to see you again.”

No, this wasn’t right. Technoblade shouldn’t be happy to see Tommy.

“I gave Punz the location of your vault,” Tommy blurted out, “I’m sorry.”

Technoblade blinked, and then he sighed. “Tommy, I can rebuild a vault. I can’t exactly rebuild you.”

Tommy started crying again.

Damnit.

Technoblade coughed awkwardly, and he spread his arms wide. An invitation.

Tommy took it, thrusting his face into Techno’s shoulder, and even though it was covered by hard armor, Tommy could still smell Technoblade’s sweaty and dirty smell.

“It’s okay,” Technoblade said, holding Tommy close, “You did it.”

“This is so dumb,” Tommy muttered, “I’m all weepy and crap.”

“It’s really not,” Technoblade assured him, “Trust me.”

Trust was a tricky thing. If he trusted the wrong people, he only got hurt, but if he refused to trust the right people, he made things harder for himself.

But Tommy was pretty sure he could trust Technoblade. He had gotten stabbed for him, after all.

“Okay.”

Tommy heard someone approach them, and he glanced up to see Phil, staring at Tommy with wide eyes.

“Hi, Dad,” Tommy said weakly.

Phil smiled, crouching down to be at their level. “Hi, mate.”

After some deliberation, Tommy reached out for Phil and pulled him into the hug. Phil wrapped his wings around Tommy and Technoblade, as though shielding them from the outside.

It felt good. It felt *safe*.

Tommy took a deep breath.

He was safe.

Chapter End Notes

And y'all thought things were gonna go poorly. You poor ignorant fools. You poor ignorant lads. Those of you who all thought things were gonna get worse. You are all so sad. /j /lh

Anyway, comment or I'll bring dream back. /j /j

5/5 five day bjar challenge. we did it <3

This hasn't been directly specified yet, but Dream tried to press the little button connecting to the bomb after letting go of tommy, realized that didn't work, and quickly snatched Tommy back.

Oh, and this is the First hug Tommy and Tubbo have had in the Entire Fic.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments. <3

Cry Me a Tear Jar

Chapter Summary

Tommy is sad.

Wilbur is also sad.

Everyone is sad despite their happiness.

Except Wilbur.

I don't think the guy's ever happy.

Chapter Notes

tw: crying, nightmares, referenced murder/character death, ptsd, trauma, surgery, implied/referenced child abuse, referenced starvation, self-blame, referenced bomb in someone's leg, weird trigger warning i know,

I promise this chapter is recovery

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The walk back to Manberg was a long and exhausting one, and Tommy was mortified to find that he actually had to be picked up by Phil after he was very noticeably stumbling.

“Sorry,” Tommy muttered as Phil bent over for Tommy to clamber onto his back.

“It’s no issue,” Phil assured him as he carried Tommy like a back-pack with seemingly no difficulty, “You’ve been underground for nearly a week, nobody expects you to be in shape.”

Tommy’s eyes were heavy, and he wasn’t sure whether or not it was from all the crying he had done earlier, the excitement of the day, or if he really had just been overexerting himself.

It was probably a combination of the three, plus the hugs.

“Yeah,” he said sleepily, “Not to mention the lack of food.”

“The what?” Schlatt said sharply, and Tommy flinched, childishly burying his face into Phil’s shoulder.

“It was nothing,” he muttered.

“It’s not nothing,” Technoblade said grimly, “Starving people and then feeding them in what seems like an act of kindness is one of Dream’s favorite manipulation tactics. Trust me, I would know.”

Tommy flinched again. He had forgotten that Technoblade had been in a similar position to Tommy just a few days ago, or however long it had been since Technoblade somehow managed to escape.

“I’ll kill him,” Tubbo muttered, his voice full of venom.

“You can’t,” Technoblade said, “That was his last life.”

Tommy stiffened, his face still up against Phil’s shoulder. That was Dream’s last life? Tommy had taken Dream’s last life?

On a subconscious level, Tommy knew that he had known all along. Why else would he have been so stricken, so horrified at what he had done? Why would the body have not disappeared at some point while Tommy held onto Dream’s wrist, refusing to let him go?

But still, to hear it from Technoblade so callously made it all so much more real.

Tommy had killed Dream. Dream was gone. Forever.

It should be a good thing, but the only thing that Tommy could manage to feel was terrible, hot, and piercing guilt flood from his chest and into his throat.

Tommy stiffened, tightening his hold on Phil. It was slightly harder to breathe.

“It was self-defense,” Phil said softly, probably feeling the shift in Tommy’s hold, “It wasn’t your fault.”

Tommy took a deep breath. “I killed him.”

“He was trying to kill you,” Fundy said.

Tommy sighed, but he nodded. They were right. It had been self-defense, and Dream had a knife to Tommy’s neck. Tommy... Tommy shouldn’t feel so guilty about it. Dream deserved what he had coming anyway.

For some reason, that still didn’t make the guilt and shame go away, but it was replaced with a small fire of anger.

“Why did he have to do it?” Tommy asked quietly, “Why-why did he force me to kill him?”

“I don’t know mate,” Phil sighed.

“He could’ve left us alone!” Tommy began shouting, clutching onto Phil all the more tightly, “Why did he decide to ruin things for everyone?! Why couldn’t he have just... why couldn’t

he have just—”

Tommy burst into more tears.

At this point he was going to dry out and become a shriveled raisin.

Phil set Tommy down and pulled him into a hug, and Tommy didn't even care that this was the third hug he had had in the span of an hour, even if it felt like a ridiculous amount of physical comfort. Phil certainly didn't seem to think so.

“I hate him,” Tommy screamed, “I hate him! So why... why does it feel this way? Why can't I just be happy?!”

Phil pulled away from the hug slightly and leveled Tommy with a serious look while somehow holding so much love and comfort in his eyes. “Listen to me,” he said, “Are you listening?”

Tommy swallowed and nodded silently.

“Good.” Phil sighed. “Tommy, you're a good person, and you care more than you let on.” Tommy wanted to protest, but they all knew it was true. “Dream did terrible, terrible things to you, but killing someone, even in self-defense, is no small thing. *None of us* blame you for what you did, but you don't have to be ashamed of yourself for feeling the way you do.”

Tommy scowled. “I hate him, but...” *He was my friend.*

Sometimes, Tommy wondered if he hated himself for having those thoughts more than he actually hated Dream.

“It's okay, mate,” Phil said softly, “It's okay.”

Tommy swallowed, and he tried to believe him.

In spite of that small setback, they reached the White House in good time, although Phil and Schlatt drank invisibility potions for some reason.

“Schlatt's supposed to be in house arrest and Phil in actual prison,” Tubbo explained quietly, “So we're trying to stay on the downlow over the fact that we let them out to rescue you.”

“Why is Phil in prison?” Tommy demanded, affronted as he watched Quackity and Fundy take Schlatt and Phil away respectively.

“Long story,” Technoblade sighed, “Involving a bomb in Phil's wing. Don't worry about it too much. They'll have a trial explaining it was Dream and let Phil out, or I'll break Phil out myself.”

Tommy shivered, but he didn't doubt it for a moment.

Another thought entered Tommy's mind as they walked up to the entrance of the White House, and he found he couldn't get it out of his mind.

"And Wilbur?" he asked quietly, "Where's he? You have him, right?"

"Yeah." Technoblade looked away. "He's in a psychiatric hospital now."

Oh. That was better than Tommy expected. He thought Wilbur would have been carted to jail for life.

"I've spoken to his therapist," Tubbo said abruptly, "She's nice. She said she'd be my therapist too, although I'd feel bad for burdening her—"

Oh no, not this again.

"Tubbo," Tommy interrupted as they entered the White House, "You need a bloody therapist. Let her be your therapist."

"What about you?" Tubbo countered, "You need a therapist as well, and she's really great, I think you'd like her—"

"This isn't about me," Tommy said as they started moving up the stairs, "This is about you. I have a dog, and now you need a therapist. We can share her, okay? Or I can find another therapist. If you like her so much, you should have her."

Tubbo froze, as though he were trying to process what Tommy had just told him. Tommy waited patiently.

A small smile formed on Tubbo's face.

"Okay," he said, his shoulders loosening a little bit, "Okay. I'll—I'll call her."

Tommy smiled triumphantly and nodded. "Good."

Any other conversation on getting proper therapists was instantly interrupted by the sound of loud bark, and suddenly, Tommy spotted a very familiar dog sprinting down the hallway.

Clementine.

His heart soared, and a wide grin spread across his face as Clementine stopped in front of him, staring up at Tommy and wagging her tail aggressively.

She pressed her head against Tommy's legs, and he laughed. It wasn't difficult to get down on his knees and beginning scratching Clementine's soft fur from behind her ears.

"Clementine!" he cheered, shifting to cross his legs so that his knees wouldn't hurt against the hardwood, "Were you a good girl to Tubbo?"

Clementine barked, and she made her way into Tommy's lap. She felt good, like a warm blanket, and Tommy continued petting her aggressively, missing the comforting feeling of

running his fingers through her soft fur.

“I missed you,” Tommy whispered, “I’m glad you’re alright.”

Clementine licked Tommy’s hand, and Tommy smiled.

“Yeah, thanks.”

They moved the Tommy and Clementine reunion to a living area with a couch that was far more comfortable than the floor. In the process, Technoblade somehow managed to collect this dog, which Tommy now recognized as max, one of the dogs from the hound army.

“Did Max time travel too?” Tommy asked, honestly not all that surprised anymore.

“Yes,” Technoblade sighed, pulling some book out of his inventory, “And thank you for reminding me of something that I have to do, because I completely forgot about it.”

Tommy would’ve asked more, but it was pretty typical for Techno to forget to do important tasks, and right now, Tommy only wanted to pet Clementine and pretend that there weren’t any responsibilities left in the world.

Tubbo sat next to him on the couch, and Tommy shifted Clementine so that they were sitting on both of their laps, just like they had done the first night before Dream’s ill-timed delivery had ruined everything.

“I missed you,” Tommy whispered to Tubbo, leaning his head against Tubbo’s shoulder, “Did I tell you that?”

Tubbo smiled. “I bet I missed you more.”

Tommy squawked indignantly. “This-this isn’t a competition!”

Tubbo laughed.

“Tommy’s right,” Techno said, looking up from the book he hadn’t turned one page of since they entered the room, his hand automatically running back and forth through Max’s fur, “This isn’t a competition.”

“Thank you—”

“But if it were, I think it’s safe to say that I missed Tommy way more than Tubbo ever did.”

Tubbo sputtered, and Tommy grew more indignant. “Well *I* missed both of you, so that’s double the points.”

“That’s not how it works—” Tubbo protested.

“It is so,” Tommy said, crossing his arms, “Because I make the rules.”

Technoblade sighed again, staring at Tommy with an emotionless expression. “You’re a child.”

“I am *not* a child!”

“Yes,” Techno said, returning to his book, “You really are.”

There was a small millisecond of silence, and then both Tommy and Tubbo burst out laughing.

Tommy wasn’t sure how long it had been since he had laughed that hard.

But he knew it felt good.

That evening, after getting fed some mashed potatoes, which tasted way better than anything Dream had given him, Tommy took a long shower and put on some deceptively soft pajamas that were left out for him.

At that point, it was already late into the night, and Tommy found himself standing in his bedroom, staring at his bed. Clementine stood next to him, and Tommy mustered a smile. At least, he wasn’t with Dream anymore, even if the idea of going to sleep made him feel strangely floppy floppy.

Well, maybe some sleep was exactly what he needed.

Tommy switched the light off. The bedroom descended into darkness.

In the dark, the room felt a lot less safe than it had a few moments ago. As a matter of fact, it was harder to see the wooden walls, large window, and spacious room space. It was so much easier to see the darkness closing in, the terrifying silence of being alone, and Dream could be coming in at any moment—

Clementine barked, nudging her head against Tommy’s leg.

Tommy blinked, glancing down at Clementine. She stared up at him, and Tommy quickly switched the light back on.

Light flooded the room, and Tommy automatically found himself relaxing, the bedroom of the White House looking nothing like Tommy’s cramped room underground.

Maybe... Tommy should just try to sleep in the light. That wasn’t completely unheard of, right? It would probably help him sleep better, provided that he could actually fall asleep in such a bright environment.

Tommy walked across the room and got into the bed, allowing Clementine to clamber in with him. He pressed his head into the pillow and shut his eyes tightly, hoping for some form of sleep over the course of the night.

Dream was trying to strangle Tommy. In the struggle, Tommy grabbed the knife sitting in the grass and sliced his neck open, causing Dream to die on top of him. Tommy tried to get out from under him, but Dream didn't move. Tommy screamed out for Tubbo and Technoblade and Phil, but nobody came. He was stuck. He was stuck under the body of his abuser, who he had *killed*—

There was something cold and wet all over Tommy's face, and Tommy gasped, his eyes snapping open.

Clementine was standing over him, licking at his face like it was coated with the most delicious dog treats in existence.

“What—”

Clementine stopped licking him, instead climbing back over him so that she could lie down beside him on the bed, staring at him expectantly.

Oh, Clementine must've woken Tommy up from a nightmare. That... that made a lot of sense, actually.

Tommy absently petted Clementine, giving her a tired smile. “Thanks, girl,” he said quietly.

This entire sleeping thing was much more difficult than Tommy had anticipated.

But surely one nightmare wasn't so bad? It was to be expected, right? Tommy had nightmares all the time, but after a few tries, he was sure to get a run without nightmares.

Tommy forced himself to go back to sleep.

After being woken by Clementine two times and seeing that it was only one o'clock in the morning, Tommy knew that this was simply not going to work.

At this point, everyone else was probably asleep, but the idea of constantly rolling over, falling asleep, and getting thrust into yet another nightmare that he would have to be woken from by Clementine, sounded less than appealing.

Maybe a walk would clear his head a little bit.

Tommy pulled himself out of bed and walked to the door, and Clementine followed him quietly. After staring at the door handle for an inexplicable moment, Tommy turned it and thrust it open, revealing the too-nice hallways of the White House.

Tommy wasn't underground. He was safe. He was fine. Nobody would hurt him. Even Schlatt was in house arrest, there was no point in being afraid.

Tommy started walking down the hallway, trying not to remember when he had been escorted everywhere by Dream, or when he had tried to escape and only made things worse, or—

“Tommy?”

Tommy jumped, letting out a startled yelp as he spun around to see Technoblade standing there.

He forced himself to relax. It was just Technoblade. It was just Technoblade. Technoblade wouldn't hurt him.

"Technoblade?" Tommy hissed, "What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be sleeping?"

Technoblade stared at Tommy as though he were trying to figure him out, which Tommy found somewhat strange. "I could say the same to you."

Tommy scowled, looking away. "I don't need sleep because I'm a big man," he said, "But you're old, so you should get as much sleep as you can get if you want to stay healthy. Because that's what old people do, they sleep."

"I'm not that old," Technoblade pointed out, his voice more tired than Tommy usually heard it, "I'm not even twenty-five yet."

"I don't know," Tommy hummed, feeling a bit like he could fall asleep on the floor himself if he wanted to, "Pretty old."

Instead of rising to his defense like Tommy expected him to, Technoblade just chuckled like Tommy had told a pretty funny joke. And Tommy *had* done that, but he hadn't expected Technoblade to appreciate Tommy's joking prowess.

"I guess to a child like you, I am pretty old," Technoblade conceded.

Tommy wanted to protest, but for no explicable reason, it felt like someone had placed a wet blanket over the peace Tommy had been feeling with Technoblade a few moments before, heavy and cold, making it much harder to forget all the crap that had happened the past few weeks.

Tommy still remembered that it was *his* scream for Technoblade that caused Technoblade to get stabbed in the first place. Maybe, if Tommy had just kept his stupid mouth shut, Technoblade would've won, and he wouldn't never been hurt by Dream and Wilbur.

"I'm sorry."

Technoblade frowned, furrowing his eyebrows. "For what?"

Tommy brought his arms up to hug himself, and he shrugged, looking away. "For getting you stabbed."

"What are you—oh." Technoblade sighed, and Tommy flinched. "Listen, Tommy, it's not your fault I got stabbed."

Tommy snapped his head over to look at Technoblade so quickly that he almost had whiplash. Technoblade didn't look angry, and he had sounded completely serious.

"But I distracted you."

“But you didn’t stab me,” Technoblade said slowly, “Dream did. You’re not responsible for what Dream did to other people.”

But Tommy distracted Technoblade, allowing Dream to stab him. Tommy should at least take some of the blame, right? He shouldn’t have screamed, he should’ve just quietly gone with Quackity instead of struggling like he did.

“I don’t understand,” Tommy said quietly.

“You were scared,” Technoblade said, “And trust me, I’ve seen scared people do heck of a lot more stupid things than scream out someone’s name.”

“Oh yeah?” Tommy challenged. “Like what?”

“Like pulling out their crossbow and nearly shooting Quackity between the eyes,” Technoblade said easily.

That was a strangely specific example.

“Where—”

“Anyway,” Technoblade interrupted, clearing his throat, “Don’t blame yourself, okay? I know that Dream said some screwed up things to you, but you’re not responsible for us choosing to protect you.”

It made sense, so why did Tommy have such a hard time believing it?

“Okay.”

They stood there awkwardly for a moment, and finally, Tommy decided to tell the truth. That’s what people did, right? They talked to people when they were struggling?

“I can’t sleep.”

Technoblade’s shoulders seemed to loosen at the admission. “Me neither,” he admitted.

“Nightmares?”

“...yeah.”

“Same.”

An idea popped into Tommy’s brain, but it was so embarrassing he was reluctant to say it at all. He nervously twisted the soft material of the pajama shirt in his hand.

But Tommy was *so tired*.

“Maybe, um—” Tommy cleared his throat. “—we could sleep together. Like, um, like when we were kids.”

When Tommy was little, he'd sometimes climb into either Technoblade, or Wilbur, or Phil's bed after a nightmare. It was somewhat embarrassing to revive such a tradition, but if Technoblade didn't mind...

"Alright," Technoblade said, "We can do that."

Tommy gaped. From Technoblade, he might as well be saying: *I'd really like that.*

Tommy silently followed Technoblade to his bedroom, and Tommy found that Technoblade already had a lamp on spreading some light into the room.

"Do you need me to turn this off?" Technoblade asked, gesturing to the lamp.

"No!" Tommy said abruptly. He flinched. He tried again, more quietly. "Sorry, but, um, can the lamp stay?"

Technoblade seemed to relax at the request. "Yeah."

Tommy slowly sat down on top of Technoblade's bed, watching as Techno took off his prosthetic and set it down on the bedside table.

Tommy couldn't help but to stare at the missing spot where Technoblade's arm used to be, and Technoblade gave Tommy a stern look.

"That wasn't your fault either," he said, "And don't worry about me, I'm adjusting just fine."

Tommy swallowed and nodded.

Technoblade nodded in return. "Now, are you going to sit there, or are you going to actually get into the bed?"

Oh. Right.

Tommy slid underneath the sheets, moving to the side so that Technoblade could get in next to him. Fortunately, the bed was big enough for the both of them, and Technoblade's presence alone was already making Tommy feel much safer than he had before when he was alone in his bedroom.

"Goodnight, Techno," Tommy said quietly.

"Goodnight, Toms."

Techno's presence didn't make the night instantly more restful, and Tommy was still woken up by Clementine a couple of times. But there was something immensely comforting in knowing that there was someone there that could actually protect him if any danger did happen to come.

The next morning, Tommy woke up to see Technoblade putting his prosthetic back on before actually sitting up and getting out of bed. Natural light had already flooded the room, which was a bit of a relief. Even with the lamp, the dark gave Tommy more chills than it probably should.

He couldn't stop himself from groaning sleepily as Technoblade's weight left the mattress.

"Sorry," Technoblade muttered, "You can go back to sleep."

Tommy considered it, but he didn't want Technoblade to leave him alone, so he sat up and forced himself out of bed himself.

"Do you have any clothes I can change into?" Tommy asked.

"What, you don't want to stay in plaid pajamas all day?" Technoblade asked as he pulled open one of the dresser drawers.

"Ha ha," Tommy said sarcastically, "I'd rather put on one of those emergency suits."

"Emergency suits?"

The reminder of what the people in the white house had to do as a result of Schlatt's past actions made Tommy's blood boil a bit, but he tried to push it away. Schlatt had come to rescue him, so that counted for something, at least.

"Never mind," Tommy muttered.

Techno shot him a quizzical look, but he chuckled an oversized red hoodie in Tommy's direction. Tommy caught it in both hands, staring down at the large clothing article.

"Techno, I think this is your hoodie."

"Wow," Techno said, sarcasm dripping in his tone, "It's almost like this is my bedroom."

Tommy winced. "Oh, right."

Technoblade continued searching through his drawers before chucking a pair of trousers in Tommy's direction as well, and Tommy was relieved to see that they, at least, wouldn't completely dwarf him in size.

After changing into the fresh clothing, Tommy watched as Technoblade brushed his shorter hair out with his fingers. He noticed that the small braid was half-undone, probably from the sleeping.

"Your braid," Tommy said, yawning.

Technoblade frowned and walked into the bathroom that came off of the bedroom, glancing at the mirror.

"Oh," Technoblade said lamely, "Yeah, I guess that's to be expected."

He brought his fingers up to his hair, probably to re-braid it, but Tommy felt an unexpected urge rise up within him.

“Can I braid it?” he asked abruptly.

Heat rose up to his face as soon as he said it, and he wondered if someone had removed his brain to mouth filter sometime yesterday. First the sleeping and now this? Next thing Tommy knew, he’d probably be asking for a hug.

Technoblade wore an unreadable expression on his face, but he nodded.

“Okay.” Tommy took a deep breath. “I guess you can, sit down, and I’ll do a braid for you.”

Technoblade sat himself down on the bed, and Tommy quickly sat down behind him, carefully taking Technoblade’s smooth hair in his fingers.

After years of practicing on family members, Tommy was quite adept at doing a braid, and he weaved Technoblade’s hair together in probably less than two minutes.

“Done,” Tommy said happily.

Technoblade nodded again, clearing his throat. “I appreciate it,” he said.

The smile on Tommy’s face widened.

Technoblade sighed, frowning suddenly, and Tommy’s heart dropped. “Tommy, we need to talk about something real quick.”

Tommy’s heart began beating uncomfortably, and he quickly moved out from behind Technoblade and sat down next to him on the edge of the bed, taking Clementine up into his lap.

“I’m sorry,” he said automatically.

“It’s not anything that you did,” Technoblade said quickly, “It’s about—” he sighed again. “—it’s about that shell that’s in your leg.”

Tommy stared down at his leg, and he suddenly remembered what Dream had said the day before.

“I put a bomb in his leg, you know.”

“Oh,” Tommy said lamely.

“Yeah.” Techno’s face twisted, and he looked somewhat guilty. “Well, we’re going to need to get that out. With, um, surgery.”

Tommy flinched. “Will they knock me out?”

“Yeah.”

Tommy's hands were shaking, and he felt slightly sick. The idea of being knocked unconscious, even if it was only through drugs, was enough to make his stomach squirm.

"Oh."

"I'm sorry," Technoblade said, "But it's not good for that to be in there, so we really do need to get it out."

Tommy grabbed onto the mattress underneath him more tightly. "Can you be there?" he asked quietly.

Technoblade blinked. "Huh?"

"Can you be there?" Tommy asked again, "While I go under."

"You're just... agreeing?"

Tommy shrugged. He hated the idea, but he knew Technoblade was right. A foreign object in his leg was going to cause a lot of problems.

"I know it needs to happen," he explained, "I just, I don't want to be alone."

"Makes sense," Technoblade muttered. He nodded. "If the doctors let me, I'll go."

Tommy really hoped the doctors would let him.

So, while Phil was having a quick trial that was on the mission to clear his name, Technoblade and Tubbo accompanied Tommy to the hospital.

First, he had a very boring x-ray taken of him, and then eh was taken to a room where the doctor explained what exactly they were going to do to get the little metal ball that was lodged in Tommy's leg.

Tommy only paid half attention, anxiety rising as he thought about someone cutting into his body to do anything, even if it was to take out something that was hurting him.

He grabbed onto Tubbo's hand, who gave it a quick squeeze.

"You didn't eat anything today, correct?" the doctor asked.

Tommy thought about it, but Technoblade had told him to forgo the breakfast so that they could just get the surgery done and over with, a philosophy that Tommy had very eagerly agreed with.

Tommy shook his head.

And then Tommy was being carted into the operating room, and only Technoblade was allowed to follow him inside.

“You’re going to be fine,” Techno promised. The doctor had begun putting the IV with the knocking-out stuff in the crook of his elbow, and Tommy’s chest squeezed uncomfortably

“Promise?” Tommy asked rather childishly as the doctors told Tommy to put what they called a ventilator over his mouth and nose.

“These are trained professionals,” Technoblade said in that dry, Technoblade-like fashion, “Nothing will happen to you.”

For something that was supposed to be knocking him out, Tommy couldn’t really feel the effects. What if it didn’t work? What if Tommy was forced to stay awake during the surgery?

Tommy wasn’t sure which was worse, being drugged unconscious, or being awake while someone cut his leg open.

He reached out for Technoblade’s hand, and Technoblade took it. Tommy forced himself to relax. It was comforting, at least, to know that Technoblade was there for him.

“If I die,” Tommy said, the corners of his vision going the slightest bit fuzzy, “I’ll haunt you as a ghost.”

“I have an update for you,” Puffy told Wilbur, sounding almost *nervous*.

Wilbur sighed. He found he was less bitter toward Puffy after a couple more sessions, although he still thought she was fighting for a lost cause. Wilbur didn’t intend to get better.

“Oh yeah?” he asked, “And what is that?”

“They found Tommy.”

The reaction was instantaneous. Wilbur felt as though ice had replaced his blood, and goosebumps rose on his skin as his heart accelerated.

They found Tommy’s body.

“Where was he?” Wilbur asked, although the answer was obvious. His body was probably somewhere underground, rotting in that maze that Wilbur helped to create.

“I don’t know all the specifics,” Puffy admitted, “But there was a confrontation, and Dream was killed, so now Tommy’s back here.”

At least they would be able to give Tommy a proper funeral now. Maybe, if Quackity was feeling kind, he’d let Wilbur attend.

“When’s the funeral?”

Puffy frowned. “What do you mean?”

Wilbur grit his teeth. It wasn't a hard question. "When's the funeral?"

Understanding dawned on Puffy's face. Good. Wilbur wasn't going to suffer any foolishness when it came to his little brother's death.

"Wilbur, Tommy's alive."

Puffy pulled another newspaper out of her inventory and turned to a page with a smaller headline.

Tommy Innit Spotted a Week Since His Disappearance

And next to the article was a photo of Tommy, his hair slightly shaggier and his body much thinner as he walked next to Techno and Tubbo.

The paper itself was full of conspiracy theories of what could have happened to Tommy, but Wilbur already knew about that, so he ignored them, instead trying to wrap his mind around the discovering.

Tommy was alive.

Tommy was *alive*.

Dream had lied to him.

Wilbur wondered why he was even surprised at this point.

Wilbur's eyes burned with tears, and he found that he was shaking. "He's alive?" he asked, his voice cracking.

"Yes," Puffy said, offering Wilbur a small smile, "He's alive."

Tommy was groggy when he woke up, and he slowly forced his eyes open.

"He's waking up," said an unfamiliar voice from above.

"That's a relief," Phil's voice replied, "Hey mate, can you hear me?"

Tommy made a groaning sound, the light blinding him slightly. He squinted, trying to figure out where he was.

"Dad?" he managed to ask.

From what Tommy could see, Phil smiled. "Yeah, mate, it's me. How are you feeling?"

Tommy frowned. "My leg hurts a little," he admitted.

"That's to be expected," the unfamiliar voice said again, and Tommy's eyes followed it to a nurse.

“Oh, okay,” Phil sighed, visibly relieved, “Thank you.”

“Is it over?” Tommy asked. That was strangely quick. Then again, he was unconscious the entire time.

“Yeah, it’s over,” Phil said, smiling at Tommy again, “I’m so proud of you.”

That was weird. Why would Phil be proud of him? The only thing Tommy had done was be a coward over a surgery that he needed to have.

“Why?”

“Techno told me how brave you were,” Phil said.

Tommy snorted. “I’m not a baby.”

“You’re right,” Phil agreed, “But that doesn’t mean you can’t be brave.”

Tommy decided that arguing Phil would probably not be worth it, so instead, he asked another question on his mind.

“Are you out of jail?”

Phil laughed. “Yeah, it was a pretty easy case to win with Sam and George’s testimonies and the remains of the totem I used to survive.”

Tommy still wasn’t quite sure what had happened to get a bomb in Phil’s wing in the first place, but he decided he didn’t actually want to know.

“Thanks,” Tommy decided to stay instead, his voice slightly joked up, “for coming, I guess.”

“Of course,” Phil said gently, “You’re my son, and I love you, and I’m truly sorry for all the times I’ve failed you.”

In all honesty, Tommy wasn’t sure he’d ever expected to hear that from Phil before.

“Really?” Tommy hated himself for how his voice cracked at that moment, so desperate for Phil’s love to be true.

Phil’s face crumbled slightly. “Of course.”

Tommy did not cry at that. He did *not*.

Chapter End Notes

There's still a lot that needs to happen in the next three chapters, but you get long chapters to compensate for the fact that I don't want to increase the chapter count.

Also 1/4 bjar challenge.

We're finishing this fic this week, my children.

I am going away for two weeks after this week and I want to finish before I start school again.

Thank you for being such marvelous readers, and I hope you enjoyed.

Comment if you don't want Wilbur to kidnap Tommy. /j /j /j <3

What's Been Before

Chapter Summary

Tubbo does some self help things.

So does Tommy.

And crimeboys gets a much needed moment of closure.

Chapter Notes

tw: possessive behavior, guilt, ptsd, crying, panic attacks sorta, referenced character death, referenced child abuse

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A few days after Tommy's surgery, Tubbo finally approached Quackity over something he'd meant to talk about for a while now.

"Quackity?" Tubbo asked, lightly knocking on the door that used to be Schlatt's office, "Can I come in?"

Tubbo didn't have to wait more than a moment for Quackity's reply. "Yeah, come on in."

Tubbo opened the door and stepped inside.

Quackity, well, Quackity didn't exactly look like the picture-perfect president. Similar to how Tommy used to sit, back when he was vice president of New L'manberg, Quackity had his feet kicked up onto the desk, and he was lounging back like he were at some sort of even rather than, you know, his office meant for working in.

"What are you doing?" Tubbo asked skeptically.

Quackity laughed. "This is relaxing, man, I don't know what you mean."

Tubbo grimaced. "You're ruining the desk."

Quackity snorted, taking his feet off the desk and sitting properly, much to Tubbo's relief.

"You worry too much, you know that, Tubbo?" Quackity asked.

“It’s a nice desk,” Tubbo protested, “Ruin a dirty and useless desk for all I care.”

Quackity actually laughed this time. “Fine,” he said, “I guess being president means I have no extra respect from my staff members.”

“About that.” Tubbo walked across the room and placed a piece of paper on Quackity’s desk. “I’m resigning.”

Quackity’s expression morphed into one of surprise, and he quickly picked up the piece of paper, his eyes scanning the words. Tubbo simply stood there awkwardly, although he doubted that Quackity would force him to stay.

“You’re sure about this?” Quackity confirmed, looking up at Tubbo seriously.

Tubbo swallowed and nodded. “I’m positive.”

Holding a position of office was too much for a teenager anyway, Tubbo decided. He wanted the chance to be a normal kid again. No politics, no wars, simply living life to the fullest.

A large grin spread across his face. “Great,” he said, “I’m really proud of you.”

Tubbo blinked, surprised. “Really?” he asked.

“Of course.” Quackity clapped his hands together excitedly. “Now I don’t have to worry about gently telling you that you should work less hard, because everyone knows that *that* is an impossible task.”

Tubbo sputtered, his face growing hot. “I don’t work *that* hard.”

“No,” Quackity agreed, “You work harder. Remember that time I found you asleep in your nice suit, muttering something about foreign affairs.”

“Yeah, because that’s my job.”

“This is my point,” Quackity said, “You’re a kid, and you work like an adult, but this conversation means literally nothing because you’ve resigned, much to everyone’s relief.”

Tubbo took a deep breath and nodded. Right. He resigned. He was going to live a simple life, and it was going to be *amazing*.

“I can still… keep my bedroom though,” Tubbo asked slowly, “Right?”

Quackity laughed. “Tubbo, at this point, the White House is also serving as a hotel. Of course, you can keep your bedroom.”

That was a relief. Tubbo wasn’t quite ready to find or build a house just yet. He’d prefer to just take some days to lie down and do basically nothing for the rest of the day.

“Thanks,” he sighed. He hesitated. “Are you sure you’re okay with me leaving?”

Quackity frowned. “Why wouldn’t I be?”

Tubbo mirrored his expression. “Well, I know you’ve got a lot going on with reforming the government and all, and I don’t want you to worry about having a new secretary of state on top of it all.”

Quackity shook his head, smiling. “Tubbo, don’t worry. I’d probably be more stressed knowing you’re still working as hard as you do than I would be learning to get along with a new person.”

“Alright,” Tubbo sighed, nodding, “Great, awesome. Thank you so much.”

“It’s no problem,” Quackity said, smiling, “Go have fun with Tommy or something.”

Tubbo nodded again before leaving the office and shutting the door firmly behind him.

A smile began spreading on Tubbo’s face.

He was free. He’d never have to wear one of those stuffy suits again. He’d never have to worry about being elected as president again. He wasn’t Secretary Underscore anymore. He was just Tubbo. Tubbo the ordinary citizen of Manberg.

“Hey, Tubbo!”

Tommy’s voice echoed down the hallway, and Tubbo turned toward him with a smile.

Tommy was grinning widely. Clementine was walking beside him and wearing a service animal vest that they had gotten her after Clementine wasn’t admitted into the hospital.

To Tubbo’s surprise, however, there was another big and brown dog with pointed ears walking next to Tommy, also wearing a service animal vest.

“Guess who I’ve gotten you!” Tommy cheered, stopping in front of Tubbo happily.

Tubbo blinked. “The dog?” he asked.

“The dog,” Tommy agreed.

Tubbo looked down at the dog, who was standing at attention. He was pretty cute, even if he was quite large.

He had to admit, it was quite sweet of Tommy to think of Tubbo and get him a dog. Tubbo himself had forgotten a ridiculous number of times to

“What’s his name?” Tubbo asked.

“He doesn’t have one,” Tommy said, crossing his arms, “You have to name him.”

Tubbo stared, his mind suddenly blank. “Me?”

“Yep,” Tommy said, popping the ‘p’.

Somehow, Tubbo didn't think Tommy would budge on the matter. After all, Tubbo was the one who let Tommy name Clementine.

Crouching down on his knees, Tubbo scratched behind the dog's ears, trying to come up with the perfect name inside his head. Benson? Bee, maybe? Maybe a mix between the two?

Tubbo hummed. "Been," he decided.

Tommy made a face. "Bean?" he echoed, "Like the food?"

Tubbo shrugged. "Sure," he said, "Or like a bee. It's spelled with two 'e's'."

Tommy scowled, but Tubbo knew it was a light-hearted one. "That makes out to be the word 'been' then, and that isn't pronounced like 'bean'. Honestly, it sounds a bit like a crappy time travel pun."

Tubbo wasn't going to admit to the pun part.

"Well too bad," Tubbo decided, "The dog's name is Been, and he is the best dog ever."

Tommy snorted. "Well, I can't argue with that," he said, "I did pick him out myself."

Tubbo smiled at Been and then back up at Tommy. "Thank you," he said, "Really. I'm super grateful."

Tommy's face went red, and he looked away. "It's nothing," he said, clearing his throat, "Just, uh, you know. I owed you. For Clementine. And also, I was rude to you earlier. And when you were rude to me you got me a dog. And you needed a dog."

Tubbo laughed. "Tommy, I got you a dog as apology for more than just being rude to you," he said. He didn't say what the real apology was for. Tommy already knew, and there was no point in bringing up bad memories.

"Yeah, well, I'm sure I've done worse in the past too," Tommy said, stuffing his hands in his pockets and staring at the floor, "I know we've already said our apologies. I just... I really wanted to get you a dog."

Tubbo got up onto his feet, smiling more widely than he thought could've been possible.

"Thank you, big man," he said, holding his arms out for a hug, "I appreciate it."

Tommy hesitated, eyeing the hug like it was some sort of trap, but then he thrust himself into it, as though that was the response he had been hoping from Tubbo all along.

"It used to be us against Dream," Tommy muttered, "But..."

"Dream's gone," Tubbo reminded him.

Tommy let out a shaky laugh. "Yeah. That."

Tubbo hummed. “How about it’s just us? We could have a house in a field full of flowers, and you could have some cows, and I could have some bees, and we would only have to worry about accommodating Ranboo when he comes along.”

“Ranboo, really?”

“He’s nice!” Tubbo protested defensively.

Tommy sighed. “He is, actually, pretty nice,” he admitted.

Tubbo smiled. “Can we just be kids? Or, at least, try?”

Tommy nodded, holding onto Tubbo all the tighter. “That sounds good,” he whispered, “I think... I think I’d really like that actually.”

Eventually, they stopped hugging, and Tubbo offered they had a sleepover in Tubbo’s bedroom. Tommy had eagerly agreed, and that’s how they found themselves sitting on top of Tubbo’s bed, their dogs in their laps, playing a game of chess.

“It’s not fair,” Tommy moaned as Tubbo took his queen, “You’re like a chess master.”

Tubbo smiled. “I’m not *that* good,” he protested, “You’re just bad.”

Tommy gave Tubbo a deadpan stare. “Ha ha, very funny.”

They continued playing when Tommy very suddenly asked, “Hey, did you ever call Puffy?”

Oh. Right.

In all honesty, Tubbo had just forgotten. Between drafting his letter of resignation, trying not to have nightmares, wondering if he wanted to go back to the future (which had pressed at Tubbo’s mind a lot lately), and making sure Tommy was alright, he just somewhat forgot that he was supposed to be getting a therapy appointment with Puffy.

“I forgot,” Tubbo said honestly.

Tommy frowned. “Do it now, while you still remember.”

“But we’re in a middle of a game.”

“That’s the lamest excuse I’ve ever heard,” Tommy said, pulling another brand-new communicator from Sam out of his pocket. Apparently Dream had destroyed his second one, which made Tubbo burn with anger at the thought. “Alright, what’s her number?”

Tubbo frowned, pulling out his own communicator and scrolling down to Puffy’s contact. “Uh—”

“No wait, actually, just call her on your communicator, that’s a lot simpler,” Tommy said, putting his communicator back into his pocket.

Tubbo sighed, and he clicked the call button, knowing that Tommy wasn't going to be taking any 'no's for an answer.

As the ringer rang in this ear, Tubbo gave Tommy a mutinous look. "You're calling her next," he whispered.

Tommy shrugged, wearing a smug expression. "If you insist."

Tubbo froze when the ringing stopped.

"Hello, Tubbo, how are you?" Puffy asked, her voice bright.

Tubbo swallowed, giving Tommy one last glare. "I, um, I was wondering if I could possibly book an appointment with you?"

Tubbo wasn't sure he had seen so much pride on Tommy's face before, and he held his breath as he waited for Puffy's reply.

It came almost instantaneously. "Of course!" she said, "I just moved here, so I don't have many clients. How does two in the afternoon tomorrow sound to you?"

Tubbo released a breath. That was alarmingly easy, actually.

"Um, that works fine," he said, "I'll be going to your office, right?"

"That's right," Puffy said, sounding somehow happier than before she picked up the phone, "Do you need an address?"

Tubbo shook his head. "No, I know where you are. Thank you so much."

"You're welcome."

Tommy suddenly snatched the communicator away from Tubbo, bringing it to his own year.

"Hello, Mrs. Puffy," he said, "This is Tommy Innit, and I appreciate you taking my friend Tubbo."

Tommy went silent as Puffy was theoretically talking, and his mouth formed a small 'o' shape.

"Really?" he asked, his voice uncharacteristically quiet as he started petting Clementine's fur with more fervor. Tubbo himself scratched the back of Been's ears, nervously wondering what Puffy was saying.

Another pause.

"Oh." Tommy cleared his throat. "That would be—that would be great... thank you so much...bye."

Tommy hung up the communicator, staring at it somewhat blankly before handing it back over to Tubbo.

“What did she say?” Tubbo asked nervously.

Tommy shrugged. “Oh, she just offered to have an appointment with me after your appointment,” he said, clearly trying to sound casual, “And I thought that sounded pretty pog.”

Tubbo grinned. “So, I guess we’re both getting therapy now, huh, big man?”

Tommy managed a small smile back. “Yeah, I guess we are just you and me, up against that post-traumatic stress.”

Tubbo snorted. Tommy’s smile grew.

Tubbo and Tommy ended up falling asleep next to each other, the lamp next to Tubbo’s bed securely on. At some point, Tommy was pretty sure he heard the door crack open, and Tommy opened his eyes to see Technoblade looking into the room.

Technoblade closed the door a few moments later, and Tommy knew that Technoblade was probably just checking in, so he didn’t worry about it too much, instead rolling over and falling back asleep.

When Tommy woke up again, it was much brighter.

He was standing in the middle of some palace courtyard. The sun was shining from behind a few trees, and everything was shockingly silent.

“Where are we?” a voice from next to Tommy asked, and Tommy turned to see Tubbo standing beside him, looking around with the same confusion and curiosity as Tommy.

“I don’t know,” Tommy admitted, “But it’s pretty cool looking.”

“Where are we?” Schlatt’s voice came from seemingly out of nowhere, and Tommy jumped, letting out a startled yelp as his heartrate increased exponentially.

Schlatt was somehow standing next to Tommy, although Tommy had no recollection of *ever* seeing Schlatt enter the courtyard, and Tommy gave Schlatt a well-deserved glare.

“No punch this time?” Schlatt asked.

Tommy scoffed. “Not worth my time.”

“Thanks.”

Suddenly, three figures appeared out of thin air in front of them, looking just as disoriented as Tommy felt.

“What the *heck?*” a person who looked shockingly like the Tommy that Tommy had seen in his dream sputtered. He was still wearing the clothes from Technoblade’s house, so Tommy assumed that meant he and Technoblade were still on good terms.

“Well that was unexpected,” a person who looked like Tubbo from said. His expression was more pleasant, although Tommy recognized the scars on his face from when Technoblade shot him with fireworks.

Schlatt must’ve recognized it too, because he flinched.

The third figure didn’t speak at all, but it only took one look at that lime green hoodie for Tommy to figure out exactly *who* he was, even if he was no longer wearing a mask.

Tommy stumbled backward, grabbing tightly onto Tubbo’s arm as he tried to process the fact that Dream was *alive, he was supposed to be dead, please he was supposed to be dead—*

Tubbo seemed to be having a similar reaction toward seeing Schlatt, and the other Tommy was already pushing Tubbo behind him, giving Schlatt a furious glare. Unfortunately, it was much harder for Tommy to dug behind Tubbo than for Tubbo to duck behind him, and Tubbo himself seemed border-line ready to run away at the sight of Dream.

And then another figure appeared in between both groups of three, wearing a grimace as though he were suffering a very bad headache.

After peering at him more closely, Tommy suddenly realized it was that Karl dude. The one that the other Tommy had said was trying to fix the time travel problem Dream had caused.

“Hi guys,” he said. He smiled and waved somewhat awkwardly, glancing between the two groups.

“Hi, Karl,” the other Tommy snarled, “You never told me Schlatt was going to be here.”

Karl’s head snapped over to where Schlatt was standing, and Schlatt waved slightly awkwardly.

“Oh,” Karl said, looking as shocked as everyone else was, “I didn’t know he’d be here.”

“Where even are we?” Tubbo asked.

“We are in the Inbetween,” Karl said simply, like that was a helpful answer.

“It’s like a time travel train station,” Tubbo supplied.

Now Tommy could understand that explanation much more successfully.

“I’m sorry, but can someone explain to me what’s going on?” Schlatt asked, “Because I’m feeling pretty left out of the loop right now.”

Karl sighed. “Basically, you and your past selves switched places in time, and now that’ve I’ve finally fixed all the issues Dream has caused, I can send you back to your original time,

if you all so choose.”

Dream was looking around, and Tommy gave him another glare, probably cutting off Tubbo’s circulation with how tightly he was holding onto him.

“Where’s the idiot?” Dream asked.

Tommy realized, with a certain degree of relief, that this was probably the Dream that swapped places with the Dream Tommy had killed.

“He’s dead,” Tommy snapped.

He waited for a snide remark, for a cold laugh, or even a statement of disbelief, but instead, the other Dream’s shoulders sagged slightly. “He deserved it,” he muttered, sounding uncharacteristically tired.

Tommy didn’t know what to make of it, so he just grit his teeth and snarled.

“Alright,” Karl sighed, “Then, Dream, you are stuck, unless you want your soul to go to a dead body.”

The other Dream snorted. “I’ll pass.”

“Alright,” Karl muttered, “One down, three to go. Tubbo and Tubbo.” He nodded to each of the Tubbo’s respectively, one of them still half hiding behind Tommy. “Do you two want to switch back, or are you going to stay?”

Tubbo glanced at Tommy, who was still holding onto him tightly. “If you don’t mind,” Tubbo said slowly, “I’d rather make the choice with Tommy.” He smiled. “I’m not leaving him.”

“Same,” the other Tubbo piped up.

Tommy could see the understanding in Karl’s eyes as he nodded.

“Okay,” Karl agreed, “Do you guys need to talk amongst yourselves?”

Tommy hesitated. In all honesty, he wasn’t sure he *wanted* to go back. What was waiting for him there? A Dream that was still alive? A Technoblade who probably wouldn’t want to let Tommy crawl into bed with him? A world where Wilbur was still dead?

No, Tommy didn’t think he wanted to leave the timeline he was in.

Tubbo’s face was also set in a frown, and Tommy could only hope that the others were thinking the same thoughts as him, because he wasn’t about to budge on this particular matter.

To Tommy’s surprise, it was the other Tommy who spoke first.

“We want to stay,” he said.

Tommy wondered why, but he wasn't complaining.

Tommy and Tubbo looked each other in the eyes and gave each other a small nod.

"We want to stay as well," Tubbo said, his voice strong and confident.

Karl blinked, looking surprised. "Yeah? Just like that? No arguments?"

Karl was giving the other Tommy and Tubbo a strange look, and Tommy had a feeling that they were the ones that were probably eager for the chance to switch back in the first place.

"And Schlatt," Karl finally sighed, "You're dead in the other universe, so—"

"Yeah, I'm not going back," Schlatt said instantly, "Besides, I'm guessing my 'other me' decided his work was done and pass on from being a ghost to the afterlife."

Huh, who would've thought?

Karl clapped his hands together, looking satisfied. "Well, that was a lot easier than I thought it was going to be," he admitted, "Just a few more things, and then you can go back to your homes."

"Thank god," Tommy muttered.

If he had to see Dream's stupid outfit for more than ten minutes he might actually scream. It was already hard enough to breathe being in the same presence of the man for four minutes.

Karl turned to Tommy, Tubbo, and Schlatt.

"Alright, so when I spoke to Chat about this separately, they said that Technoblade hadn't dealt with the egg yet," he said seriously, "Tell Technoblade he needs to get on that."

"What egg?" Tommy asked.

Karl sighed. "It's this corrupted ender dragon egg that possesses people, so you'd best just destroy it while it's small."

Yeah, that did not sound pleasant at all. What sort of *egg* possessed people?

"We'll—we'll remind him," Tubbo said, looking about as alarmed as Tommy felt.

Karl smiled. "Good," he said. He turned to the others. "I think that's it actually," he said, "Well, thank you for your cooperation. And *please*, nobody mess with time travel again."

Tommy saluted. "Can do."

Technoblade was just enjoying his simple breakfast of cereal when the sound of two children and their two dogs came crashing down the hallway from next to the kitchen.

DOGS. DOGGOS. BEEN. Pronounced like BEANS. WE SHOULD HAVE SOME BEANS. BEANS IN THE BREAKFAST SOUP, BEANS IN THE BREAKFAST SOUP

Technoblade only sighed as the children crashed into the room.

“Oh, are you having breakfast soup?” Tubbo asked, glancing at the cereal sitting in front of Technoblade.

HAHA YES BREAKFAST SOUP. WE HAVE ANOTHER TO ADD TO OUR BREAKFAST SOUP CULT. BREAKFAST SOUP, BREAKFAST SOUP, ALL HAIL THE BREAKFAST SOUP

Tommy and Technoblade both made a face at that.

“It’s cereal,” Tommy said, gesturing wildly, “Not ‘breakfast soup.’”

Tubbo hummed. “Well, soup is just a liquid dish, and there’s milk in that cereal, so it’s a breakfast soup.”

Tommy groaned, grabbing a couple of bowls from the cabinet. “You’re making me wish I had gone to the other timeline. At least the other Tubbo wouldn’t be making *breakfast soup* comments.”

YESSSSS THEY DIDN’T SWITCH. THANK GOD. EW IMAGINE IF THEY DID. WE’D HAVE TO GET USED TO A DIFFERENT TOMMY AND TUBBO. WEIRD. WE LIKE OUR RACoon BOI AND EX-PRESIDENT BOI EXACTLY AS THEY ARE.

“Oh, he totally would be,” Tubbo said.

Tommy sighed. “Yeah, probably.”

Technoblade sighed, deciding he might as well make *some* attempt at figuring out what’s going on. “I’m sorry, but what are you talking about?”

“Nothing,” both Tommy and Tubbo said in unison.

They sat down across from Technoblade and poured the same box of cereal Technoblade had used into their bowls, the sound of the small pieces of cereal clattering against the glass china filling the room.

IT’S RAINING CEREAL FROM OUT OF THE SKY. BREAKFAST SOUP, NO NEED TO ASK WHY. JUST OPEN YOUR MOUTH AND CLOSE YOUR EYES. IT’S RAINING BREAKFAST SOUP. YUM YUM YUM YUM YUMITY Yum.

“Actually, there is one thing,” Tommy said, forgoing the milk and simply eating his cereal with his fingers, “Karl said that you need to destroy this egg thing.”

Technoblade’s heart sunk. He had forgotten all about that, and then he had remembered, and then he had forgotten. It was an unfortunate cycle of getting distracted by much more pressing concerns and then completely forgetting that Technoblade was told to deal with this so-called egg to begin with.

Technoblade pulled the letter out of his inventory and quickly scanned the contents.

“Oh yeah,” Technoblade said, “I was thinking of just blowing the entire thing up, if I’m being honest. It’s pretty deep underground at the moment, if Karl’s coordinates are correct.”

“Oh, and that’s a good use for our extra TNT!” Tubbo said cheerfully, “We could make a party out of it!”

Tommy frowned, looking very confused. “Why would we make a party out of exploding an egg?”

“Because first of all, parties are fun,” Tubbo said, “And second of all, we won’t get possessed by an egg, which I think is a bit of a relief.”

PARTIES. WILL THERE BE CAKE? I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SOME NICE MUSIC AT THIS PARTY. LIKE IT’S A SMALL WORLD. IT’S A SMALL WORLD—No, everybody knows the best song is the duck song. WELL A DUCK—IT’S A SMALLL SMALL WORLD....

Technoblade wasn’t the most social guy in the world, but he knew that the party would probably be good for *Tommy* at the very least. He could always sit in the corner and do nothing while the others talked and ate cake.

“I don’t see the harm in it,” Technoblade admitted, “It might be fun.”

“Don’t we have to speak to Puffy in the afternoon?” Tommy asked.

FINALLY, THEY’RE GETTING THERAPY. NOW TECHNOBLADE’S TURN.

Tubbo frowned. “Oh right,” he said, “Hmmm... let’s just do it during lunch, and then Tommy and I can head back for the therapy.”

“Sure,” Technoblade sighed.

The party was actually pretty small, all things considered.

Phil, Technoblade, and Tommy stayed above ground as Tubbo, Quackity, and Fundy went underground to deal with the Egg, wearing armor, which apparently protected them from the egg’s influence.

“That wasn’t hard at all,” Tubbo said as soon as he came back.

“Yeah, that Egg was pretty small,” Fundy agreed, “Although it was completely red, so that was pretty freaky. Personally, I think it would’ve been cool for some Halloween pranks.”

“Yeah, except it can apparently possess people,” Tommy said.

“Good point.”

After the egg was destroyed, which Tubbo reported only took five pieces of TNT, and even that was apparently excessive to shatter the thing to bits, they went to a park near the edge of Manberg and set down a picnic blanket.

Tommy and Tubbo had brought a cake from Niki's. "It isn't a proper celebration without a cake," Tubbo had insisted, and it was admittedly nice to see Niki again, who was all but ecstatic to see that Tommy was doing pretty well.

It was weird, but a nice weird.

Fundy brought some sandwiches, and together they ate a nice lunch, even calling Schlatt so that they could tell him what he was missing out on during house arrest.

Schlatt didn't seem to mind, though.

"I don't want any of the minors drinking alcohol," he had said in joking sternness.

Seeing as there was no alcohol at all, they all laughed.

Maybe Tommy was wrong about Schlatt. He really was giving this 'good guy' thing his all.

Tommy, unfortunately, still wasn't allowed to eat a ton. He was allowed to eat a lot more than he used to, the effects of Dream starving him slowly fading away, but his stomach was still too small to handle a lot of foods.

Still, Tommy managed to eat most of his sandwich and a few bites of his cake, and Phil had smiled at him proudly, ruffling his hair and telling him he did good.

Tommy was smiling so widely he felt like he could probably be glowing.

Puffy's therapy sessions were really helpful, Tommy found.

She asked a lot of questions, but she also gave some really good advice without making Tommy feel like she was under her command. It was almost like they were partners, working together to fight against all the messed-up crap in Tommy's head.

"Phil told me that Wilbur tried to break out today," Tommy said quietly, remembering Phil saying it grimly over the kitchen table.

Puffy didn't take her eyes off of Tommy, which Tommy appreciated. It was like she was paying attention to him, and only him, and what he had to say wasn't second place to whatever other stuff she had in her life.

"He did," Puffy confirmed, "He didn't get very far."

Tommy nodded, letting out a shuddering breath. "That's good," he muttered, running his fingers through his hair. He glanced up at Puffy. "That's good, right?"

“You tell me,” Puffy said, “How do you feel about it?”

Tommy brought his hand out of his hair and squeezed a stress-ball in his hand tightly. “I-I’m relieved, I think,” he said, “Wilbur hurt me really badly.” He took a deep breath. “But also, I don’t know, I guess a part of me does want him to come to me. I just... he’s been there for me for so long, and I... I miss him, I guess.”

“That’s perfectly understandable,” Puffy said.

“I told him I wouldn’t leave him,” Tommy continued, his eyes burning with tears, “And I haven’t spoken to him *once*.”

“Wilbur hurt you,” Puffy reminded him gently, “You don’t owe him anything.”

“He... he used to hug me, back in Pogtopia,” Tommy whispered, shaking as he squeezed the stress ball even more tightly, “He used to promise he’d protect me, just like I’d promised to stay.”

“But you weren’t safe,” Puffy said sadly.

“Right.” Tommy took a deep breath. “It was... um—” Tommy was still reluctant to say the word abuse. “—he hurt me physically, and he would say harsh things to me, and it doesn’t matter why he did it or how much he loved me, it was still wrong of him.”

“Right,” Puffy said, “No matter what promises you made in the past, they shouldn’t come at the cost of your safety or happiness.”

Tommy swallowed. Puffy was right, of course, but there was still something Tommy wanted to do.

“Can I visit him?” he asked abruptly, his voice louder than before.

Puffy hummed. “I’d have to speak to the staff,” she said, “And, of course, it’s a question of whether or not you’re ready to speak to him. Is there any reason in particular you want to visit him?”

Tommy nodded. “I just... I want to tell him. I want to tell him how badly he hurt me. I want that closure.”

Puffy nodded. “I’m not going to say no,” she said, “But just know that you don’t have to confront him face to face. Some people write letters to their abusers that they never intend to send for closure. You have other options.”

Tommy nodded, filing away the letter idea for later.

“I want to speak to him,” Tommy repeated.

Puffy nodded again. “Alright,” she said, “I’ll see if I can make it work.”

When Wilbur was cuffed and led to a small room with a table sitting in the center, he admittedly wasn't sure what to expect. Was this a new room for the therapy? Had Quackity finally decided to have him executed? Was he getting a visitor?

Wilbur, admittedly, was less keen on dying these days, and more interested in getting out of this disguised prison so that he could see Tommy again. He just wanted to have Tommy in his arms again, hold him close and promise him that everything would be okay, just like they always used to be.

But every escape attempt Wilbur made only ended in failure, and Wilbur was forced to accept the unfortunate truth. He might never see Tommy again.

Wilbur really would wish Quackity could just speed his execution along so that he didn't have to worry about it anymore.

But then the door opened, and *Tommy* entered the room.

For a moment, Wilbur held his breath, hardly daring to believe it's real. There was no way they'd just let Tommy into the same room as Wilbur, not when they very clearly hated Wilbur so much. There was no way that Wilbur would finally be able to see his little brother again.

But there he was, his hair cleaner than Wilbur remembered it, his skin clean of bruises, his clothing looking well washed and not covered in the ash and grime of Pogtopia.

"Tommy," Wilbur whispered as Tommy sat down across from him, "Oh, *Tommy*."

Wilbur's throat and chest and eyes burned, but he didn't care, because Tommy was right there, Wilbur was so close to holding him, to cradling him to his chest, and if it weren't for the damned handcuffs, Wilbur wouldn't have hesitated before doing so.

"Tommy," Wilbur whispered again, a tear slipping down his cheek, "I missed you so much."

Tommy was sitting abnormally stiffly, his face in an expression that Wilbur couldn't quite place, but it hardly mattered, because it was still *Tommy*.

"Hi, Wilbur," Tommy said, "I-I missed you too."

"I never thought I'd see you again," Wilbur whispered, still soaking in everything about Tommy's beautiful, wonderful, living face, "I thought I'd lost you."

"I know," Tommy sighed, "But I'm alive. I'm fine, even."

Wilbur smiled, his mind suddenly racing. "Toms, you can finally break me out of here," he began whispering hurriedly, "We can finally be free of all this, live together, be only you and me—"

"No."

Wilbur stopped short, the word echoing in his head over and over again. "No?"

“No,” Tommy said again, his voice harsh, “No, Wilbur, I want you to listen, and I want you to listen closely, okay?”

A few weeks ago, Wilbur might’ve slapped Tommy for using that tone of voice. Now, Wilbur only managed to feel like Tommy had shaken his core.

Everyone had something to say to him. Dream had lied. Technoblade had told the truth. Phil had promised not to kill him and followed through, much to Wilbur’s chagrin. Puffy told Wilbur that there was still hope, that Wilbur still had something to live for outside of Tommy.

And suddenly, Technoblade’s words had never rang louder or clearer than they had in that moment.

“Tommy doesn’t belong to you, Wilbur.”

“Okay,” Wilbur said quietly, “Okay.”

Tommy’s eyes widened, like he hadn’t expected that answer. Still, his face returned to its original determined scowl.

“You didn’t protect me.”

Wilbur instantly opened his mouth in protest, but Tommy pointed at him threateningly, and he shut his mouth quickly.

Still, it didn’t make any sense. Wilbur had done *everything* to protect Tommy. That’s all he had ever wanted for Tommy. He had only ever wanted Tommy to be safe. He had only ever wanted for Tommy to stay.

“You didn’t protect me, alright?” Tommy said, his voice somewhat high-pitched that time, “I know you might’ve thought you were protecting me, but you weren’t. You hurt me, Wilbur. You locked me in a closet because I argued. You broke my wrist when I tried to call Phil. You called me a coward when I tried to persuade you not to destroy L’manberg.”

This time, Wilbur didn’t try to defend to himself. In all honesty, he wasn’t sure what he *should* say. For some odd reason, “making sure he didn’t leave” felt like a weak excuse.

“I love you, Wilbur,” Tommy continued, “Despite all that crap, I still love you. You’re my brother, I don’t think I could stop loving you if I tried. And before, I would’ve followed you to the ends of the earth.” Tommy took a deep breath. “But...you hurt me. You hurt me, and you didn’t keep me safe from *yourself*, so, from now on, I’m not going to visit you, okay? At least not until you figure out what you did was wrong. Probably a lot longer after that.”

Oh god. Tommy was *right*, wasn’t he? Technoblade had tried to tell Wilbur all along. How many times had Technoblade told Wilbur he was hurting Tommy? How many times did Wilbur justify himself for leaving Tommy in a sobbing mess, because Wilbur always came back to make it better? How many times had Tommy stared up at him in fear, all because of what Wilbur did to him?

Tommy was Wilbur’s brother. Tommy was Wilbur’s brother, and Wilbur had *hurt* him.

How was Wilbur only just realizing this now? How did come it took *Tommy* to tell Wilbur how much Wilbur had hurt him? How could Wilbur have been so stubbornly ignorant—

“Wilbur?”

Wilbur blinked, suddenly aware that Tommy was still in front of him, his glare slightly softened at the edges.

But it hardly mattered.

Wilbur could barely breathe as he looked at Tommy, so clean and unharmed and *safe*, safer than Tommy had been with Wilbur, the one who promised to *protect* him.

Burning shame filled Wilbur’s chest, moving into his throat and making Wilbur feel all but useless.

“I—” It was as though the shame were preventing Wilbur from even speaking, as though he couldn’t even say the words he needed to say before it was too late, and Tommy was gone forever. “I’m so sorry.”

It wasn’t enough. It wasn’t nearly enough.

Tommy sighed, standing up. “Well, that’s something, I guess,” he muttered. He looked back at Wilbur, his expression suddenly sad, and Wilbur even saw a tear trail down his cheek. “I just... I just wanted to say goodbye, I guess. Hopefully not for forever, but definitely for a long while.”

Tommy shut his eyes. “Goodbye, Wilbur,” he said, the words rushed and halted.

Wilbur didn’t protest as Tommy walked quickly toward the door.

Wilbur swallowed before whispering, “Goodbye.”

Tommy slammed the door behind him, and he was gone.

Chapter End Notes

I know y'all wanted a happy sappy crime boys reunion but too bad.

The very last epilogue will time jump over the course of years, and then you can see some healing between the two.

If the time travel was confusing, no it wasn't. /j

Basically:

- pogtopia era people and bedrock bro era people switched
- karl gave them the choice to switch back

-they chose not to
-done

Next chapter will be very large and then there will be the epilogue and then we will be done.

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed. <3

Comment or I'll kill Tommy. /j

Edit: to those of you wondering about the future timeline, that actually gets it's own story in the sequel <3
so like, subscribe to the series i'm about to add now

A Calm Sixteenth

Chapter Summary

Everyone collectively works to heal.

Chapter Notes

tw: implied/referenced child abuse, ptsd, referenced heart issues, referenced alcoholism, abandonment issues

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dear Dream,

I hate you.

You were terrible to me. You toyed with me like I was your plaything, lying and manipulating me at every turn, trying to convince me that I needed you, that you were my only friend.

But that wasn't true, was it?

You needed me because you had pushed away everyone else.

It's pretty pathetic, to be honest.

So yeah, I'm done with you. I killed you. You're dead, and I'm recovering from all the crap you pulled. I'm doing great without you. People care about me, and I know now that you are just a sad, lonely, and pathetic liar.

You didn't win. You lost, and I'm going to have the best life without you.

Your worst enemy,

Tommy Innit

Tommy re-read the words carefully before folding up the piece of paper and dropping it in front of Dream's grave. If Dream was a sad and lonely ghost, he could read it. If Dream was sad and lonely stuck in the afterlife and unable to read it, then that was all the better.

Dream's grave itself was already pretty sad and lonely. It was just a tombstone in a cemetery. There were no fancy embellishes, no name carved into the stone. Just a plain old grave that could've belonged to anyone.

Except it didn't belong to just anyone. It belonged to Dream, and Tommy wanted nothing more than to kick the stone and destroy it with his pickaxe and then smelt it in a furnace and —

Tommy sighed. It was just a stone.

Still, for good measure, he kicked it. The stone didn't move, and some pain in his toes was the only reward for Tommy's troubles.

Dream didn't deserve a stupid tombstone, even if it didn't even have his name on it.

Then again, Tommy remembered the frustration he had felt when Wilbur hadn't gotten a funeral, hadn't even gotten buried before he and Phil quietly did it by themselves, and by the end of his life, Wilbur had committed mass destruction.

So maybe, for George and Sapnap's sakes, at least, he could suffer the tombstone. Maybe.

"He didn't turn out very good, did he?" a familiar female voice said from next to Tommy.

Tommy's heart skipped a beat, and his head snapped over to the figure standing next to him. At first, his chest felt like it had frozen over when he saw green clothing and a white mask, but then he realized that the green was darker, that the mask had a different design on it.

"Hi, Drista," Tommy muttered, "Have you come to mourn your stupid brother?"

Drista hummed, clearly thinking to herself. "He used to be really nice, you know," she said, sounding thoughtful, "But then he got bitter."

"Why?" Tommy asked, curious despite himself.

"It was my fault," Drista said simply, "I'm a god, and he wanted help from a god. And, well, that's against the rules."

"It's... against the rules... for gods to help people," Tommy said slowly.

If Tommy were Dream, he might've been pretty upset by that as well. Had Drista really been able to just go ahead and save Tommy from Dream this entire time?

"It's more complicated than that," Drista sighed, "We can't interfere. Gods are powerful Tommy. We can't become weapons for humanity, nor can we make humanity our weapon."

That sort of made sense. At the very least, Tommy understood what it felt like to be a tool of someone more powerful than him.

Honestly, Tommy wasn't in the mood to be bitter against passive gods. Tommy was trying to be happy. Holding a grudge would do nothing to further that goal.

“Did you tell Dream that?”

“At first,” Drista said, “I should’ve stopped visiting if I’m being honest. I think having around a powerful god who refused to help him was frustrating to him.”

It was weird to think that Dream might have actual reasons for doing what he did, that he didn’t just wake up one day and decide to be the worst person to ever walk the earth.

Tommy glared down at the grave. “Still doesn’t give him an excuse to hurt people.”

“Of course not,” Drista agreed, “Still, I played a part in Dream’s decline, so I thought I’d apologize.”

It was equally weird for a literal goddess to tell him that she was sorry for doing nothing. Well, she was there that one day in exile, Tommy supposed, but Tommy didn’t know if Drista only had access to this timeline, and he really didn’t want to confuse things.

“Okay.”

“I’m sorry.”

Tommy sighed. “You didn’t make him do the things he did. But, if it would make you feel better, it’s fine. Just go and cause chaos. I heard you’re good at that.”

Drista let out a laugh that echoed slightly, even though they were outside. “Alright,” she said, “See you around, Tommy. Or not. I don’t know.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Tommy said, rolling his eyes, “Bye, Drista.”

Tommy blinked, and Drista was gone.

Since that day was the designated day for apologies, Tommy ran into George on his way back from the cemetery.

“Tommy!” George greeted, sounding cheerful, “It’s good to see you again. How are you feeling?”

“I’m fine,” Tommy said, not wanting to discuss all of his personal issues with *Gogy* of all people, “How are you?”

“I’m...well, I could be better,” George admitted, his smile fading away, “But I did want to talk to you.”

Tommy sighed, but he nodded. He might as well let George say whatever he needed to st for his sake, if nothing else.

“Sure.”

George sighed. “I’m sorry,” he said, at least not wasting any time about it, “I trusted Dream, and I only ended up hurting you more, and I’m sorry for that.”

It took Tommy a moment to realize what exactly George was talking about. Then, he remembered what Tubbo had told him about how Dream managed to get Techno's finger on his windowsill.

"oh, you mean the uh, the delivery," Tommy said, relieved to finally be understanding, "Yeah, it was pretty dumb of you to believe Dream's lie, but, like, I've believed his lies too. It's not your fault."

George looked doubtful. "But—"

"No buts," Tommy said sternly, "It wasn't your fault. You were just trying to be a good friend, which I appreciate. Got it?"

George took a deep breath and nodded, a small smile forming on his face. "Got it."

Tommy nodded, feeling satisfied. "Good."

"You're a good kid, Tommy, you know that?" George glanced up at the sky, looking thoughtful, "I'm sorry we had to fight in all those wars against each other."

"Yeah, well, it happens, I suppose," Tommy said, "I'm sorry too, for the record."

They shook hands, and that was that.

"So, we've created our list," Puffy said, sounding strangely gentle, considering who she was dealing with.

Wilbur stared at the piece of paper where Puffy had written down the list that Wilbur had helped to compile. It listed every single wrong thing Wilbur had ever done to Tommy inside and outside of Pogtopia, as well as some things he had done to others.

It was shameful, how long the list was. Some of them made Wilbur feel nauseous.

Cutting off Techno's finger.

Threatening his son.

Locking Tommy in a closet.

Maybe the third one in those examples shouldn't have been the most important one to Wilbur, but it was.

Because as much as Wilbur was beginning to realize that he had wronged more than just Tommy, the simple fact remained that everyone else had left him behind.

"Before you can change these behaviors, we have to understand what caused these behaviors in the first place," Puffy continued, "Tell me your reasoning."

Wilbur sighed tiredly, breaking into some harsh coughs. “I... I didn’t want to be alone. I wanted... I wanted him to stay.”

“And for those who weren’t Tommy?”

Wilbur shrugged. “I was angry. I’m still angry. They—they *left* me. What makes *me* so unlovable that everybody leaves?”

“Sometimes people leave through no fault of your own,” Puffy said sadly, “It’s not kind, and it’s not fair, and sometimes there’s no good reason for it. You’re lovable. You just need to give others the chance.”

Wilbur scowled. “Tommy left because of how terrible I am.”

“Tommy wants space because of the things you *did*, not because of the person you *are*,” Puffy said, “There’s still hope for change, Wilbur. You just have to work for it.”

Wilbur hoped she was right.

“And what do you suggest?”

“You need a better support system,” Puffy said, “You need more than just Tommy to trust and rely on.”

Wilbur wasn’t sure how feasible that would be. “Fine,” he said shortly, “But don’t expect anyone to *want me*.”

They spent the rest of their time together going through their list, talking about ways Wilbur could have healthily handled each situation. Many solutions involved communication, respect, and trust.

It was astonishing to realize how little Wilbur had actually trusted Tommy would stay, instead resorting to measures that made him feel slightly nauseous.

“Just so you know,” Puffy said when their time was up, “I’m proud of you for making this effort.”

Wilbur wasn’t sure what he was supposed to say to that, so he didn’t.

Schlatt had to go to the hospital again.

Apparently, drinking coffee as a replacement for alcohol, while for some was a good solution, for Schlatt had been a horrible idea from the start. Something about the high levels of caffeine only made his heart problems worse.

So, yeah, that was unfortunate. Quackity had been pretty upset, which was funny, because Schlatt was pretty sure that a decent amount of the nation would be overjoyed if he dropped dead.

Still, Schlatt decided that participating in self-destructive tendencies such as drinking too much coffee and risk dying of a heart attack *again* was not worth it, so he started alternating with replacements such as sparkling water and juice.

As for general house arrest life, it wasn't so bad. It was quiet, but Schlatt needed a little bit of quiet. He got visited sometimes, although they were pretty brief. Tommy's visit lasted all of two minutes.

"Thank you," Tommy had said haltingly, "For not being as terrible as you used to be."

"I really am sorry for what I did."

"I believe you." Tommy glared. "But I'm still angry at you. If you hurt Tubbo ever again, I'll make you regret it."

"Good."

Puffy was one of Schlatt's more frequent visitors, although she didn't come as a therapist. Puffy was Schlatt's sister, after all, and Schlatt appreciated her willingness to look past all the screwed-up crap he did in the past.

"It was bad," Puffy had admitted to him one morning, "But you've done really well in replacing those habits with healthier ones. I'm proud of you."

"How are the kids doing?" Schlatt asked, "If you're allowed to say."

"They're doing well," Puffy said, beaming, "I'm proud of the both of them."

Schlatt nodded. "I can't tell you enough how relieved I am they finally got the therapy they so desperately needed," he said.

Puffy smiled. "I'm glad I moved here when I did." She gave Schlatt a stern look. "Have you spoken to anybody yet?"

Schlatt stared, his mind going blank. "Should I?"

Puffy sighed. "I'll find you someone."

Phil had all but forced Technoblade to go to therapy.

Then again, with Chat constantly shrieking at Technoblade to get therapy, it was useless to resist from the start.

However, Technoblade was surprised to realize that it actually wasn't terrible.

Sure, Technoblade wasn't really one to discuss his "feelings" or talk about his weakness, but the therapy at least gave him positive coping mechanisms to, well, everything. Honestly, Technoblade wanted to know why he hadn't done this therapy thing sooner.

BECAUSE YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN TO US IDIOT. WHY DIDN'T YOU LISTEN. YOU NEVER LISTEN TO ME, YOU NEVER LISTEN. YOU NEVER LISTEN TO ME—

Technoblade tuned them out.

Tommy would still come into Technoblade's bedroom in the middle of the night, quietly requesting if they could sleep together. Technoblade never said no, always glad of Tommy's company, even if Chat was relentless in their teasing about it.

*HAHA BIG BROTHER BLADE. **TECHNOBRO.** Technosoft. **I'm gonna cry.** Finally bedrock bros prevails.*

Technoblade would never admit it out loud (or at least that's what he thought, before he ended up telling his therapist), but he sometimes had nightmares over losing Tommy. He had nightmares of finding Tommy's body in those dark caves. He had nightmares of Dream stabbing Tommy instead of Technoblade.

He had nightmares about Phil and Wilbur as well, but somehow the nightmares about Tommy haunted him the most. Technoblade blamed it on Tommy being in captivity during his first week of being free.

It was always a relief to wake up from those nightmares and see Tommy sleeping next to him, alive and physically unharmed.

One night, Technoblade finally told Tommy about Chat.

"Tubbo told me you knew about the voices," Technoblade began slowly, staring up at the ceiling that was dimly illuminated by the lamp.

"Oh yeah," Tommy said, his voice thick with sleepiness, "Those guys. What are they up to?"

*WE ARE SO UP WE HAVE HIT THE MOON. **TOMMY YOU ARE SO CONSIDERATE WE ARE DOING WELL. WE ARE GONNA DO CREIMMMMMMEMEESSSSSSSSS. Ah yes, crime memes. My favorite kind. CRIEMMEMEMEMEMEESSSSSS***

"Nothing important," Technoblade replied, "I just thought there was something you'd probably like to know."

"Sure," Tommy said, "What is it?"

Technoblade sighed, already exhausted by this conversation that was only encouraging Chat's chaos. "My voices time traveled."

Tommy froze. "They *what?*" he demanded.

*OH, YOU OF LITTLE FAITH. **WE WERE THE TIME TRAVELERS ALL ALONG.** MUAHAHHAHAHAHAHAHA*

"My voices time traveled," Technoblade repeated, "I was minding my own business and suddenly my voices knew the future."

“Huh,” Tommy said, still sounding disbelieving, “What did you call me when you found me hiding in your basement?”

*I KNOW THIS I KNOW THIS. **RACCOONINNIT RACCOONINNIT.** Badger. **Raccoon.** Badger. **Raccoon.***

“They can’t seem to decide between badger and raccoon.” Technoblade yawned. “But I’m going to go with raccoon, considering that they’ve been calling you ‘raccooninnit’ ever since they did their time travel.”

“Oh prime,” Tommy muttered, “They really are from the future.” He was silent for a moment, and then he suddenly burst out laughing. “you must’ve been so confused!”

“Yes, laugh at my misery,” Technoblade said dryly, “Honestly, it was a bit of a relief when both of you turned out to be time travelers, because at least I could get a proper idea of what had happened in the future.”

“Are you saying I’m cooler than your voices?” Tommy asked, smiling.

“Oh yeah, without a doubt.”

*HEY. **RUDE.** OKAY BUT THAT WAS PRETTY SWEET—**YOU DON’T WANT US? FINE, I GUESS WE’LL GO BACK HOME.***

Technoblade ignored them.

Tubbo and Tommy started their new house.

They distanced it a little bit away from L’manberg—which Quackity had renamed—finding a nice, empty flower field that Tommy said didn’t look like Logstedshire. Once they had settled on a place, they started building.

Tubbo mainly worked on the house while Tommy was far more concerned with the different barnyard animals they would be keeping. By the time their first day of construction was over, the house had barely any progress while Tommy already had a chicken coop and a cow.

After that, Tubbo invited the others to help.

Fundy was somewhat helpful, although he mainly goofed off with Tommy. Tubbo found he didn’t mind that much, though. He himself took a break from building, and the three of them went off to find bees for their bee farm while Technoblade and Phil continued building their house.

Their completed home had three bedrooms, a nice kitchen, and a living area, and both Tommy and Tubbo were extremely satisfied with the result.

“I like it,” Tommy said, entering the bedroom with the closest view to the cow, “I call this bedroom.”

Clementine immediately leapt up on top of Tommy's self-proclaimed bed, and Tubbo smiled. "Poor Ranboo will just have to settle for whichever I don't want."

"He'll live," Tommy sniffed, "At least *he* won't have to deal with any of that crap."

Tubbo ended up choosing the bedroom closest to his bees. Apparently, there was something comforting about seeing your pets through your window.

Domestic life was... new. Not bad, just new.

Tubbo would spend his morning gardening and taking care of his bees. The practice was soothing, and Tubbo liked the feeling of productiveness without the stress of deadlines or risking his life.

Tommy had picked up sewing again.

"Puffy suggested I try experimenting with hobbies," Tommy explained, thrusting a soft blanket into Tubbo's arms, "And I already know how to sew, so I decided to give it another try."

Tubbo agreed that was a pretty good idea, and he made a mental note to ask Niki to teach him how to bake.

Niki came over a few days later, helping both Tommy and Tubbo to make chocolate chip cookies.

After that, Tubbo began integrating baking into his schedule. It was a nice pastime.

November sixteenth came only a few days after Tommy and Tubbo had gotten properly settled into their new house, and Tommy had half a mind to just duck under his blankets and sleep through the entire day.

Tubbo, however, seemed to have other plans.

"You can't stay in bed forever, you know," Tubbo reminded him.

"I can, and I will," Tommy muttered, "Nothing catastrophic can happen to me if I just chose to do nothing."

Tubbo hummed. "Or..." he said, "you and I can spite the sixteenth and do something actually enjoyable for once."

Tommy rolled over, cracking his eyes open. "And what if it goes wrong?"

"It won't."

"But what if it will?"

Tubbo's face became slightly more somber. "Then we'll get through it." He sighed. "Listen, we're doing so much better than we were the last November sixteenth we had, and I'm sick of being paranoid because of a number on the calendar."

Clementine licked Tommy's hand, and Tommy sighed. "Will it really make you feel that much better?"

"It really would."

How hard could having a good day be anyway? Tommy had loads of peaceful days in that week alone.

"Okay."

They didn't do anything drastic. As a matter of fact, they just started their day as usual. Tubbo went outside to garden. Tommy fed his cow and went back inside to sew a scarf for the colder weather. Tubbo made brownies while Tommy started working through those Lord of the Rings books that Technoblade had loaned him.

Technoblade and Phil came to visit the two, and they shared the brownies, talking about their respective lives.

"I want another arm," Technoblade said, clearly joking, "One for formal occasions."

"I bet Sam would do that," Tommy said instantly, remembering how Sam had tried to convince him that he wasn't hated by everyone, "You know what? Yeah, Sam can do that."

Tommy instantly messaged Sam about it, and Sam instantly replied, offering for Tommy to come and help. Tommy grinned at the news.

"I am going to help design your new arm," Tommy said, sticking his nose up dramatically, "Because I am so cool."

"Oh no," Technoblade said in monotone, "My poor arm will be in ruins."

After the visit, Technoblade and Phil went home. Tubbo called Schlatt to congratulate him on not dying of a heart attack, and Tommy reminded himself that Wilbur was alive and L'manberg was whole.

Tommy and Tubbo spent the rest of the evening in relative silence.

All in all, for such a terrifying date, it was alarmingly mundane.

"I guess you were right," Tommy said when the clock struck midnight, "Nothing went wrong."

Tubbo let out a sigh of relief, petting Been in his lap. "And that's that."

Wilbur stared at the communal communicator. He then stared at the sheet of paper with phone numbers patients were allowed to call, his eyes zeroing in on Phil's name.

Did he really want to do this?

Wilbur took a deep breath. Yeah, he did.

Hands trembling, Wilbur took the communicator and dialed Phil's number, holding his breath as he listened to the ringtone.

"Philza Minecraft speaking."

Wilbur forced himself to breathe. "Phil?" he asked, his voice wavering.

He waited for the hate. He waited for the disappointment. He waited to be hung up on.

Instead, Phil spoke with such warmth that Wilbur could hardly believe it. "Wilbur," he said, "It's good to hear from you again."

Wilbur didn't think anyone could blame him if he cried.

Ranboo was brand new to the area, but even he was pretty sure that he was trespassing on private property when he realized the flower field he was entering had a house sitting in the center.

It was a nice-looking place, but sadly, it was not *his* place, so Ranboo slowly turned around, hoping that nobody noticed him accidentally trespassing.

"Hey, you!"

Oh no. Ranboo was doomed.

Ranboo slowly turned around, raising his arms in surrender as two teenagers sprinted toward him. "Sorry, I didn't mean—"

"What's your name?" the blond kid asked, interrupting Ranboo rudely.

This was a very strange confrontation.

"...Ranboo?"

"Hi, Ranboo!" The other teenager said, smiling cheerfully. "I'm Tubbo, and the rude one is Tommy. Would you like to come in for some cookies?"

Cookies did sound pretty good.

Wait... hadn't Ranboo heard the names Tubbo and Tommy before?

"Do I know you?" he asked, peering at the two.

“Maybe in another life,” Tubbo said, “But not technically, no.”

And before Ranboo could say anything else, he was being dragged into the house, and fed milk and cookies.

When Ranboo had decided to visit L’manberg, this was not what he had in mind. He didn’t quite remember what he had in mind, but he knew it wasn’t this.

“No offense, but this is all very strange.”

Tubbo snorted.

“Ranboo,” Tommy said with a sigh, “We’re going to be very upfront with you.” He and Tubbo glanced at each other like they knew some forbidden secret. “We’re from the future. That’s how we know you.”

Ranboo tried to process the information.

Emphasis on *tried*.

“You’re *what?!* ”

Chapter End Notes

One more chapter my friends!

The epilogue isn't gonna be super long I don't think. It's really just gonna be a bunch of snapshots, so I wouldn't be surprised if it's only around 1k words.

Ranboo finally joined and was instantly kidnapped. <3

Comment or I'll kill Clementine in the epilogue. /j <3

It has instantly occurred to me that dogs don't have human life spans so while she will not die in the epilogue she will die eventually and that makes me very sad. ;-;

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments! <3

(also reminder this fic will have a sequel for the other timeline so keep an eye out)

Epilogue

Chapter Summary

A life is lived, and two brothers meet once again.

Chapter Notes

tw: ptsd, implied/referenced child abuse, guilt

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The days blended together.

After the initial shock, Ranboo was pretty receptive to the fact that Tommy and Tubbo just kind of knew him. Eventually, he mentioned that he recognized them from the news, and Tommy and Tubbo were forced to explain that they were founding fathers of L'manberg.

Despite that shock, Ranboo was willing to move in, and the house of two became three.

Even from house arrest, Schlatt found a way to butt his annoying horns into everything. For instance, once, while Quackity and Fundy were visiting, Tommy mentioned that he wished he could play piano again.

On Christmas day, they found a bloody piano on their front porch, apparently paid for by Schlatt.

Tommy, Tubbo, and Ranboo made a separate room for the piano to live, and Tommy found himself sitting on the piano bench and staring at the keys, trying to will himself to play.

But did he have any right to play? Wilbur loved music. It felt almost... wrong to play an instrument without him.

Puffy assured him that it was not, and music was a great way to cope with stress and negative feelings.

After that, Tommy found himself playing the piano often, and it was nice to fill the house with some more life.

As far as Christmases went, actually, that one was a major improvement from the one spent hiding from Dream at Technoblade's house.

A few months later, on one of their trips to the Nether, Ranboo and Tubbo found a clearly orphaned baby zombie piglin. They called him Michael and brought him home.

Tommy was the only one among them who could actually speak *some* Piglin, but they ended up bringing Technoblade in to communicate with the child.

“He’s fine with staying,” Technoblade finally deduced, “And he likes the name Michael.”

“Does he have a different name?” Ranboo asked nervously.

Technoblade shrugged. “If he does, he doesn’t want to talk about it,” he said simply. He gave Tommy a knowing look. “I never took you to steal Phil’s adopting habit.”

Tommy crossed his arms. “It’s Tubbo and Ranboo adopting the child, not me. I’m just in charge of making his clothes.”

“Eh, close enough.”

And so, their house of three became four, and they made a separate room for Michael, which Tubbo and Ranboo and *maybe* Tommy filled to the brim with toys.

The best toy was the stuffed cow that Tommy made, no question.

Tubbo argued it was the little plastic bee hanging on a string in a jar, but of course Tubbo would say that. He named every one of his bees and had a memorial for each one who died.

At some point, Ranboo and Tubbo got platonically married. Tommy wasn’t exactly sure *when* it happened. He just knew that one day Tubbo called Ranboo his husband, and they admitted to Tommy that they had been married for a little bit now.

Tommy had *maybe* raged, demanding to know why they hadn’t invited him to the wedding.

Ranboo informed Tommy there was no wedding, only the signing of legal documents.

Tommy thought that was stupid, and he made sure to tell them so.

Tubbo and Ranboo only laughed, and Tubbo said that if Tommy cared so much, he could always play a wedding song on the piano while Tubbo and Ranboo dramatically said their vows.

That’s exactly what they did.

Things weren’t perfect, of course. Tommy and Tubbo still got nightmares and panic attacks, and they both still saw Puffy fairly frequently. Ranboo had some weird sleepwalking issues that they worked out, and raising a child was less than easy. But all in all, things were improving.

The years started blending together, and they continued breathing to the rhythm of life.

On Tubbo's eighteenth birthday, Tommy gave him a card that said: *Congratulations, you are old now.* On Ranboo's eighteenth birthday, Tommy called him an old man.

In retaliation, on Tommy's eighteenth birthday, Tubbo and Ranboo baked him a cake with the words: *Welcome to the Old People Club!*

Phil, who had started adventuring again but still visited very frequently, found that exceedingly hilarious.

As Michael got older, he learned more and more of the common language, and soon everyone was able to communicate with him freely and easily. Tommy started homeschooling him, and Tubbo and Ranboo took him to the park so that he could make some proper friends his age.

Little kid birthday parties were exhausting, and every time Tommy had managed to successfully send all of Michael's friends home, ignoring the strange looks he received from the parents (who were either wondering why Tommy was so young, or recognizing him from the news), Tommy would collapse onto the couch and let Clementine sit on top of him comfortingly.

When Tommy was twenty-one, a few years after Schlatt had been freed from house arrest, Wilbur was released.

For the first week or so, Tommy kept an eye out, wondering if Wilbur was going to come marching down the path and demand to see Tommy.

He never did. Puffy told him that Wilbur was likely giving Tommy space, giving Tommy the chance to approach Wilbur if he so wanted.

The concept of Wilbur giving Tommy space was strange, but Tommy appreciated it.

Tommy knew that Phil had been visiting Wilbur, and Technoblade said that he'd probably try to heal their relationship a little further into the future.

And Tommy missed Wilbur, or, at least, he missed the old Wilbur. The one who existed before Pogtopia.

Besides, if Tubbo could heal his relationship with Schlatt over the years, Tommy sure as hell could do it with Wilbur.

It took about three weeks for Tommy to summon up the courage to visit Wilbur's place, which was a decently far away from where Tommy, Ranboo, and Tubbo lived.

When he reached the front door, Tommy could hear the muffled sound of guitar playing, Wilbur's voice coming from the other side of the walls. It sounded so much healthier and whole compared to the last time Tommy had spoken to Wilbur.

And Tommy hadn't heard Wilbur play the guitar since his decent. It was good to know that Wilbur had picked up the practice again.

Tommy swallowed, and he knocked on the door.

The guitar playing halted suddenly.

“Coming!” Wilbur’s voice called out, and Tommy braced himself as the doorknob turned and the door swung wide open.

Wilbur was... Wilbur was a lot different, but somehow entirely the same.

The large, yellow jumper Wilbur was wearing reminded Tommy a lot more of Ghostbur than the Wilbur who haunted him in Pogtopia, which calmed Tommy’s heart to a certain degree. Wilbur’s eyes no longer had heavy bags, and his features were almost softer, less jagged, compared to when they were in the ravine.

“Tommy?” Wilbur whispered, his eyes wide, like he could hardly dare to believe it.

Tommy mustered a small smile. “Hey, big man.”

Wilbur still looked shocked, like he had been put on a stage without a script. It was pretty funny, considering all the times Wilbur had managed to act like he always knew what he was doing.

“I, Tommy, I, what are you doing here?” Wilbur’s voice cracked. “I thought you’d never want to see me again.”

Tommy shook his head. “I wanted time,” he said quietly, “I love you, Wil, despite everything you did.”

Wilbur’s face became anguished. “I’m so sorry, Tommy,” he whispered, “I know that’s not enough, I know that won’t make up for the things I’ve done, but I’m trying so hard to be a better person, but I understand—”

Tommy held up a hand to silence Wilbur’s speech.

“Schlatt once said that spiraling into self-hate only created more problems than solutions.”

Wilbur closed his eyes and nodded. “Yeah, um, that sounds like something Puffy would say.”

Puffy really was the best.

Tommy took a deep breath. “I’m willing to try this again.”

Wilbur looked stunned. “I—you are?”

Tommy nodded, smiling a little more. “Hello, Wilbur Soot.” He held out his hand. “I’m Tommy Innit. I live somewhat nearby to your house.”

Wilbur still looked completely out of his depth, but he tentatively took Tommy’s hand and shook it. “Hello, Tommy Innit,” he said solemnly, “Thank you for coming to visit.”

“Did you know that we’re brothers?”

“Don’t say that,” Wilbur said, his voice wobbling, “I will cry.”

The grin on Tommy’s face grew.

Things weren’t perfect between them, and Tommy knew it would take years or their relationship to reach the level of closeness it used to be, if ever.

But this gave him hope.

And when Tommy returned home, he sat next to Ranboo and Tubbo on the sofa, resting his head on Tubbo’s shoulder as Clementine climbed into his lap.

“How’d it go?” Tubbo asked quietly.

“Good,” Tommy said petting Clementine’s fur, “It was good.”

“I’m proud of you,” Ranboo said, smiling.

Tommy’s chest grew warm, and he yawned. Apparently, serious conversations were draining.

“I’m just gonna nap,” he murmured.

“On top of me?” Tubbo asked.

“Yes.”

Tubbo and Ranboo laughed, and Tommy’s breathing relaxed as he fell asleep, safe with his family.

Chapter End Notes

And there you have it!

Wow, it's, um, it's genuinely hard to believe that I'm actually done, to be honest. I've been working on this fic for over half a year now, and the massive amount of support it's received has been *incredible*. Thank you all so much for all of the love and support you gave me, because i would not have been able to finish this fic without y'all.

Some special mentions.

[ProcrastinatorQueen](#): without you, this fic wouldn't have chat at all, and technoblade would've been a minor antagonist.

[ExtraTiredOfYourCrap](#): thank you for progressing the plot by asking me not to cut off techno's finger

Thank you to the person I am too lazy to find who suggested Techno should die to escape.

Oh, and thank you to [Opengates345](#) I stole the breathing rhythm of life metaphor from their comment. <3

And thank you to *everyone* who stuck with me to the end.

Anyway, I'm not sure I have much to say. This has been super fun to write, stay tuned for the sequel for the other timeline, and maybe check out some of my other works if you so choose. ^-^

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed, and please be nice in the comments! <3

Comment or I'll undo the happy ending. /j /lh

End Notes

I have a [Tumblr](#) now! Check it out if you want. There'll be chapter progress reports, sneak peeks, art, and maybe even some exclusive content if enough of you guys are interested.

Scream at me on [discord](#).

(also, this has been asked a couple of times, so just so y'all know, my pronouns are she/her ^-^)

Works inspired by this one

[Too Much](#) by [Ihasmagma](#)

[i just really wanted to beat up c!dream](#) by Anonymous

[Wrong Place for Redemption](#) by [CreativeMerki](#)

[Tommyinnit is extremely stressed and confused for three chapters](#) by [My_own_time \(orphan_account\)](#)

[My Dear, I was gonna wait for you](#) by [Innerspacewaffle](#)

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